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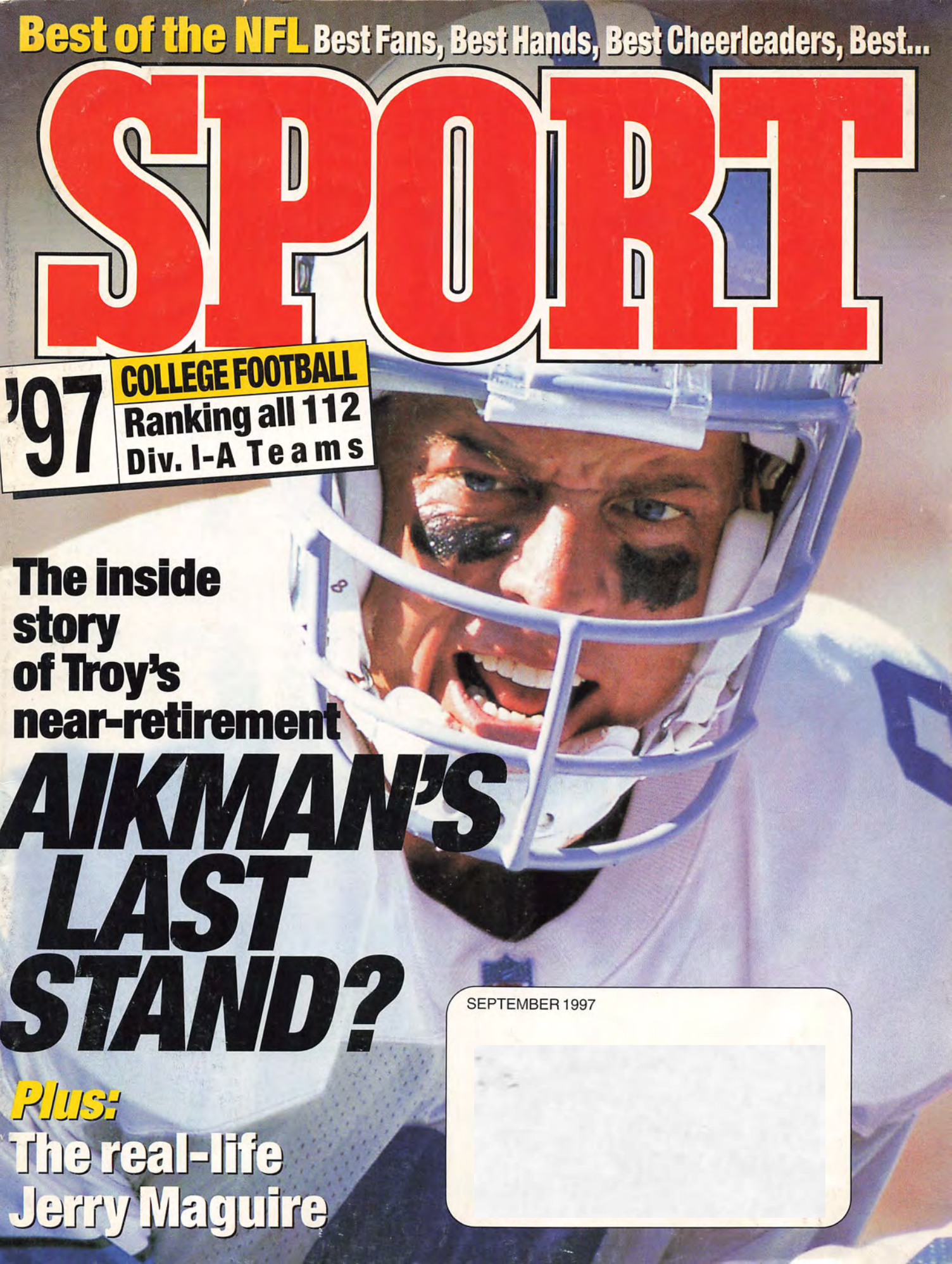

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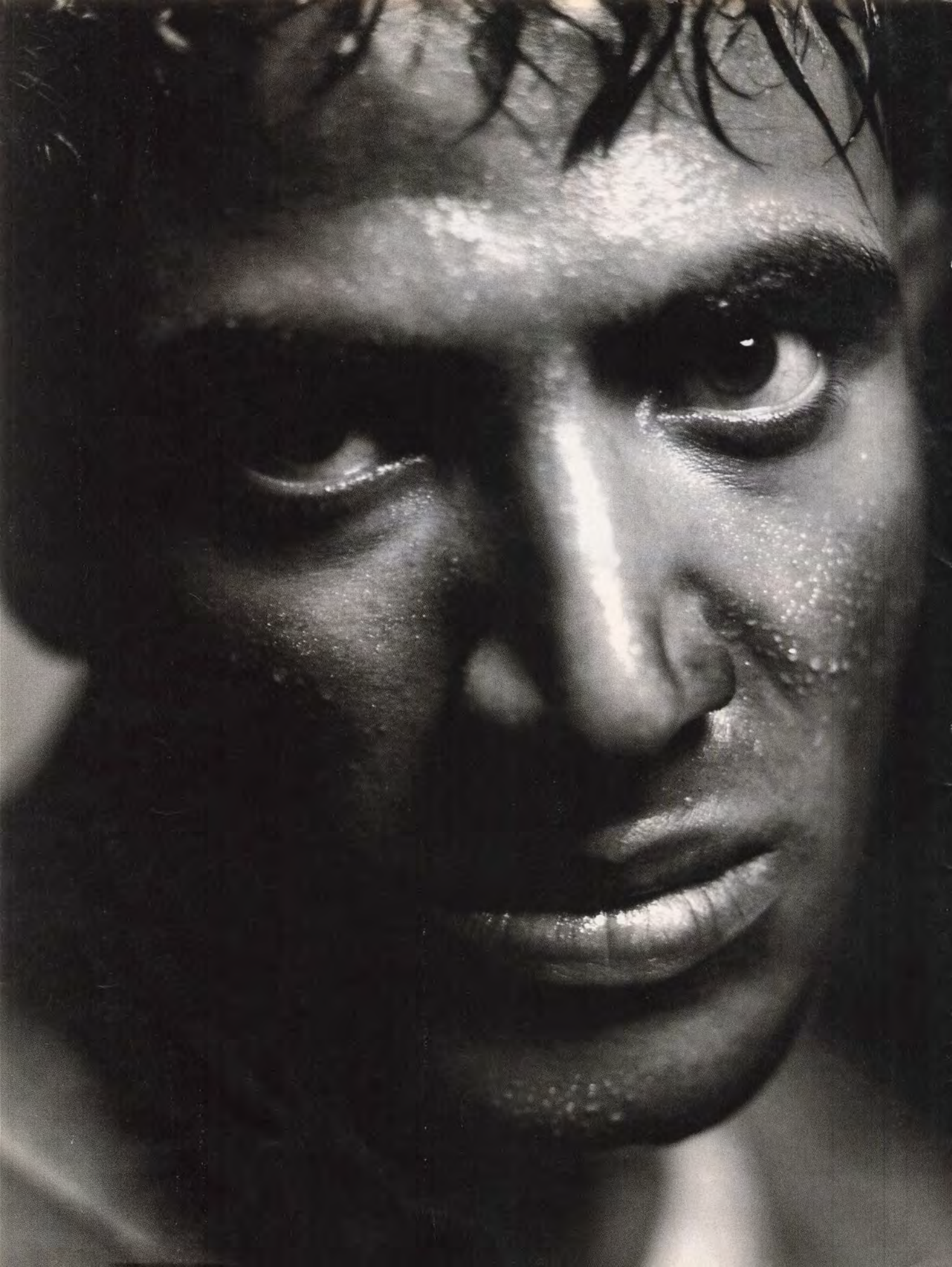

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"If I thought we were gonna continue in the direction we were headed, then, no, I wouldn't be interested in playing anymore."
—Aikman

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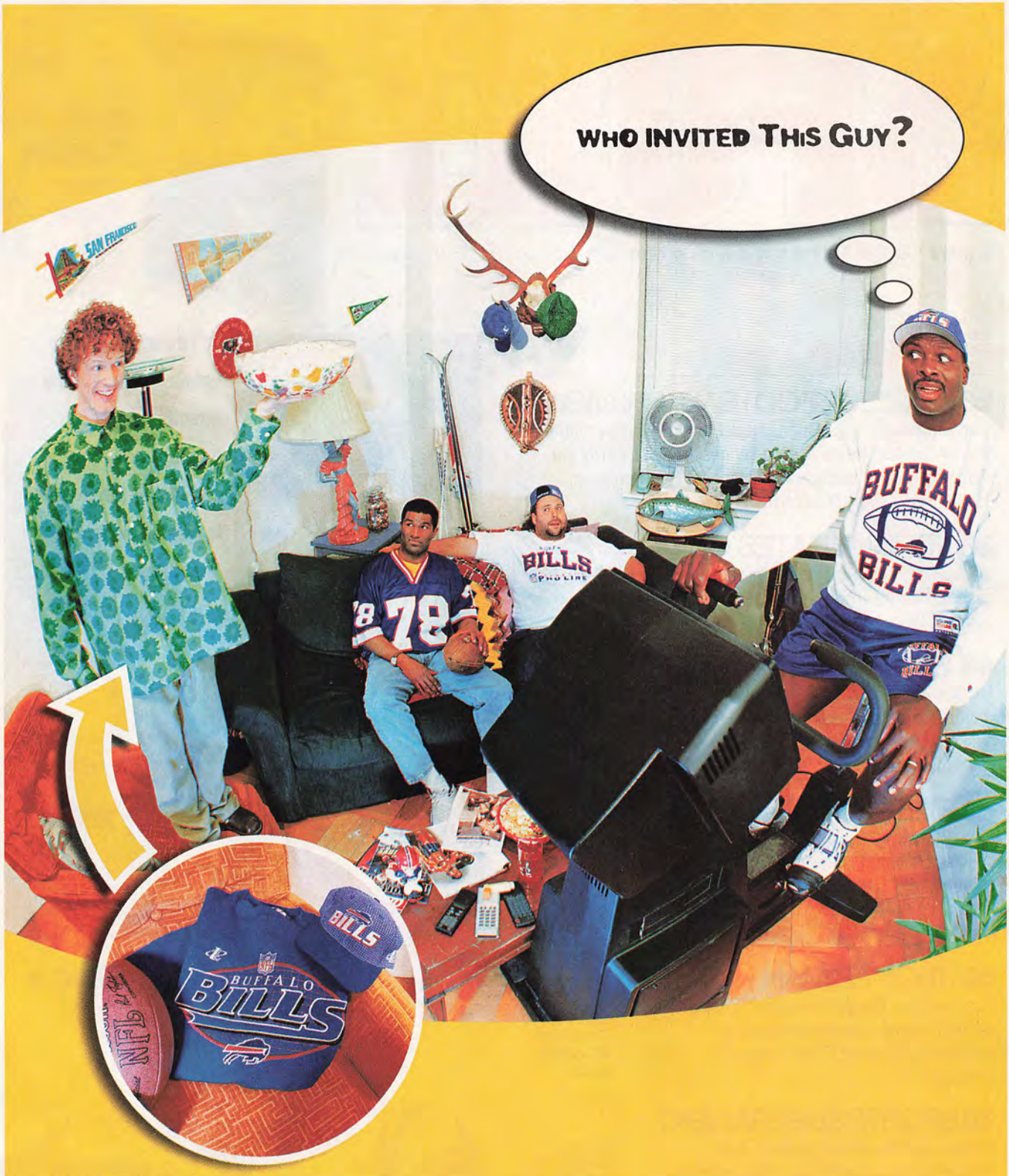
COVER PHOTO:
TROY AIKMAN BY ROB TRINGALI JR./SPORTSCHROME

BILLS FANS: SPORTSCHROME; TROY AIKMAN: TOM DIPACE; LEIGH STEINBERG: MICHAEL CHIABAUDO; KEVIN FAULK: ALLEN KEE/BRSP



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Letters

A Cold Draft

You guys need to do your homework. When I read in your NBA draft preview ("Don't Believe the Hype," July) that you had Danny Fortson as only the 22nd-best prospect in the draft, I was puzzled. You wrote, "He might experience Stanley Roberts-like troubles in keeping in shape." Fortson is the hardest worker ever to play for Bob Huggins at the University of Cincinnati. In fact, in head-to-head matchups, Fortson made mincemeat out of Raef LaFrentz, Kelvin Cato and Jerald Honeycutt.

Ken Wilson
Westchester, Ohio

Stern Advice

I read your Q&A with David Stern ("League of His Own," July) and was left impressed with his accomplishments, vision and sense of the importance of the game's integrity. However, as I watched this year's NBA playoffs, I saw one thing over and over that truly needs to be addressed by Mr. Stern and the NBA: the constant complaining that players are allowed to bombard officials with. Are refs perfect? Of course not. But in basketball, they interpret and enforce the rules, end of story. I coach elementary and middle school boys basketball, and what the NBA players do to the refs (and what the refs allow them to do) is unfortunately trickling down to the kids I teach. Mr. Stern, please work on this, for the good of all of us fans of the game and its integrity.

James Voss
Dansville, Mich.

Super Muddled

You tried to preview the WNBA ("Supermodels," July) in less than three pages, including pictures, yet bad-attitude quarterback of the month Jeff George gets three full text pages. Maybe by the time I'm in the WNBA, you'll do a better job!

Rhonda S. Lockett-Morton
E-mail

Quarterback Controversy

Nice interview with Jeff George ("This Is Where I Belong," July). Jeff has been misunderstood and has had to live with stories from a decade ago. All he wants is to move forward. The photo on page 53 has George wearing a cap that says "Team Sports." In 1997, Jeff will display just how much of a team player he is. Super Bowl? Possibly.

Jeff Lybarger
E-mail

Jeff George misrepresented himself in the July issue of SPORT. He led us to believe his passing game will help the Raiders. Purdue, Illinois, Indianapolis and Atlanta fans beg to differ. When the going gets tough ....

Mike Elliot
Wabash, Ind.

Dream Come True

I really enjoyed your story on Tim Duncan ("Dream Tim," July). Tim is a great player and a great person. I play Santa Claus to children and asked for and received autographed basketballs and posters to give to needy children. Tim, coach Dave Odom and the rest of the Wake Forest team fulfilled my wish.

Paul Foran
Saco, Maine

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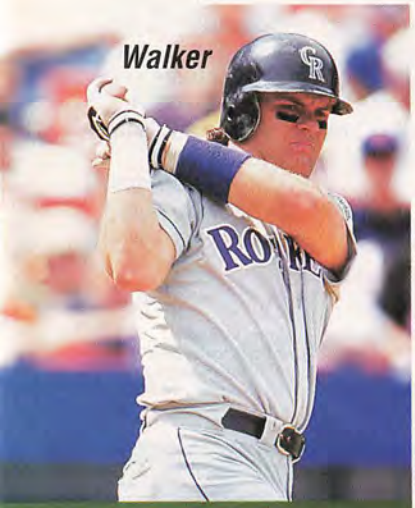
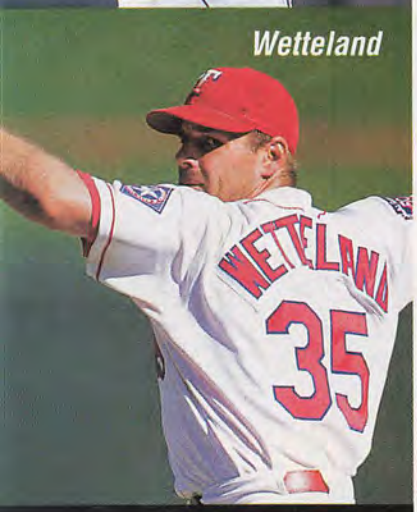
Felipe Alou's Current Club Is Respectable, but Oh, Canada, What Could Have Been


Walker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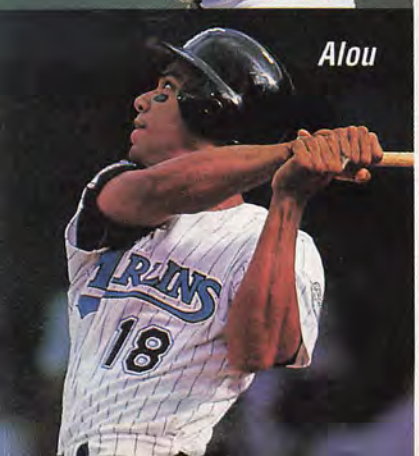

Alou

As baseball's pennant races were settling in for the long summer, Larry Walker was flirting with .400 in Colorado. In Cleveland, Marquis Grissom was triggering a revamped offense. In Florida, Moises Alou was a 24-karat stud on the Gold Coast Marlins. In Chicago, Mel Rojas was trying to save the Cubs from that horrible start. Jeff Fassero was the best left-hander under 6-10 in Seattle. And in Texas, John Wetteland was stylishly finishing off things, often started by Ken Hill.

Don't say the Montreal Expos never gave you anything.

All those superstars—along with 11 lesser, also long-gone lights—were members of the 1994 Expos, a dime-on-the-dollar crew that threatened to bankrupt the Atlanta Braves.

Oh, what a summer that was .... By mid-August, the Expos, owners of the second-lowest payroll and the best record in the majors, were 74-40 and six games up on the three-time division-champ Braves. Then, on the way to busting up the Atlanta dynasty, the Expos themselves were busted by the players' strike and thereafter quickly disintegrated to the sound of chirping birds. "Cheap! Cheap!"

So while Montreal does not figure to make the postseason any time soon, its alumni again will be well-represented. Already, since the split, the ex-Expos have shared six division championships and have earned two rings (Grissom with the '95 Braves and Series MVP Wetteland with last year's Yankees).

But more amazing than how those '94 Expos were torn asunder is how manager Felipe Alou keeps managing to glue them back together. In 1995, they dipped to 66-78 but returned to win 88 games and finish second in '96. Again in '97, they're up to their overachieving ways. Alou was the 1994 Manager of the Year and has finished in the top three two other times, but it may be time for him to ascend to Manager of the Decade.

Yes, we demand a recount of Jim Leyland's genius votes. That's not a matter of opinion, but the conclusion from a unique common-ground comparison. Leyland, of course, had the misfortune of working for the NL's other miserly franchise, the Pittsburgh Pirates. Leyland did all right while he had all the horses, winning a third consecutive NL East crown in 1992. Then Barry Bonds, Doug Drabek, Danny Jackson, Steve Buechele, Alex Cole and others departed. Thereafter, Leyland's Pirates never again threatened .500, going a cumulative 64 games below through the end of his reign in 1996.

But Alou doesn't want credit. He'd prefer some of those players back, and another crack at a championship.

—Tom Singer

Grissom

TOM DIPACE

So Much More in '94

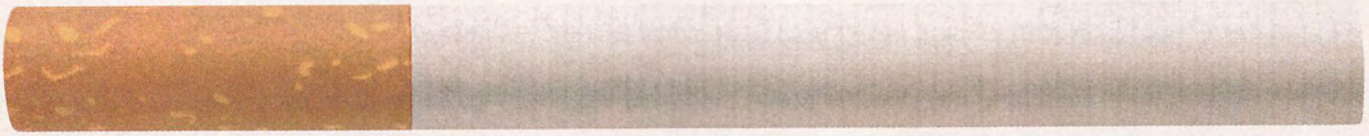
The starting lineup of the star-studded Expos of three short years ago:

Position	Player	Where He Is Today
CF	Marquis Grissom	Cleveland
2B	Mike Lansing	Montreal
LF	Moises Alou	Florida
RF	Larry Walker	Colorado
C	Darrin Fletcher	Montreal
SS	Wil Cordero	Boston
1B	Cliff Floyd	Montreal
3B	Sean Berry	Houston
RH	Ken Hill	Texas
LH	Jeff Fassero	Seattle
CL	John Wetteland	Texas

DAVID N. SEELIG; TOM DIPACE (2)

"What the heck have you been smoking?"

Yours have additives.*



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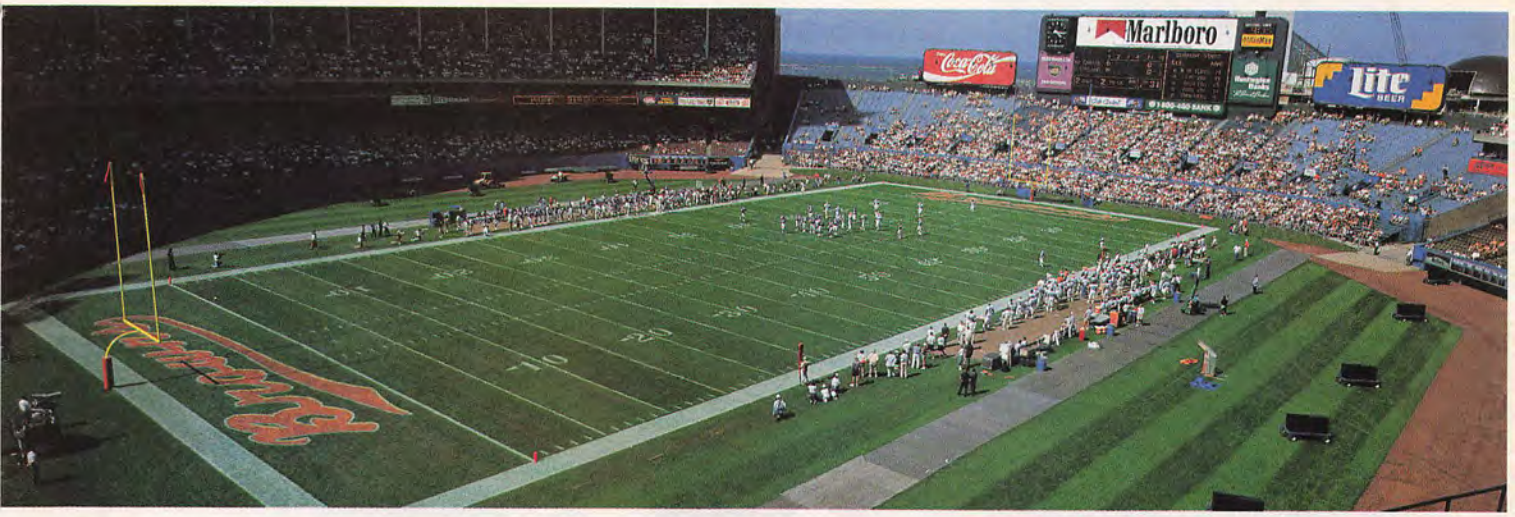

Practice of Deception

BRIAN SPURLOCK

NFL heads protest indignantly if you call them "exhibitions." They are "preseason games," thank you.

Fine and dandy, but what's the purpose of having some teams play the equivalent of a third of their regular-season schedule in glorified scrimmages?

"In the current player system, preseason games are more important than ever to team development," insists Green Bay coach Mike Holmgren. "Rosters turn over faster, and we need preseason games to teach our system to free agents and rookies, and to develop cohesion."

Geez, what do they do at all those mini-camps? Practice their drink-showering technique? If summer school is so critical to success, how indicative is preseason performance of regular-season fortunes? Not very.

During the '90s, a dozen teams have enjoyed an undefeated preseason, and half of those failed to make postseason appearances. Further, since 1990, Super Bowl teams show a composite exhibition record of 27-34-1. So there.

As for helping determine lineups ... MVPPs (Most Valuable Preseason Players) tend to turn into MIAs. In 1995, Darick Holmes led in preseason rushing, no doubt to the hearty applause of Buffalo teammate Thurman Thomas, and the Chiefs' Steve Bono was the top passer. The NFC's top quarterback last summer? Jeff George. Doug Allen, assistant executive director of the NFL Players Association, indicates the union will again try to get the preseason slate shortened when the richer 1998 TV package will compensate for any loss of revenue. Never mind cutting back on the number of games; just cut the existing games to one quarter, which is all starters play anyway.

Oh, there are a couple good reasons for having these games. Foremost, they are the NFL's major international marketing tool, with exhibitions this summer in Dublin, Mexico City and Toronto. And they help Las Vegas and Atlantic City occupy the idle minds of Barnum's people—you know, the born-a-minute suckers who actually take action on preseason point spreads.

You gotta hang out at singles bars to hear dumber lines.

—Tom Singer

Does It Matter?

Is there a correlation between preseason and regular-season success? Not based on recent evidence.

Super Bowl teams in the 1990s and their preseason records:

1990—Giants (4-0); Bills (0-4)
1991—Redskins (1-3); Bills (2-3)
1992—Cowboys (2-3); Bills (2-2)
1993—Cowboys (1-3-1); Bills (2-3)
1994—49ers (3-1); Chargers (1-4)
1995—Cowboys (2-3); Steelers (1-3)
1996—Packers (3-1); Patriots (3-1)

Undefeated preseason teams in the '90s and how they fared in the regular season:

1990—Giants (13-3); Lions (6-10); Falcons (5-11)
1991—Cardinals (4-12); 49ers (10-6)
1992—Jets (4-12); Vikings (11-5); 49ers (14-2)
1993—Lions (10-6)
1994—Colts (8-8); Bears (9-7)
1995—Eagles (10-6)
1996—None

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OUT: Matt Maloney

IN: Larry Bird
OUT: Magic Johnson

Tale of the Tape

Ricky Watters vs. Keyshawn Johnson

If we were to use our tape measure to conclude the winner of this month's Tale of the Tape, the first body part we'd size up would be the mouth. How else can any of us tell whose is bigger? In five NFL seasons, Philadelphia Eagles running back Ricky Watters has given us more braggadocio quotes than Snoop Doggy Dogg and LL Cool J combined, while New York Jets wide receiver Keyshawn Johnson didn't even need a career to get a book published that ripped practically every Jet since Joe Namath. So—*ding, ding*—let's start this battle ... and may the best mouth win.

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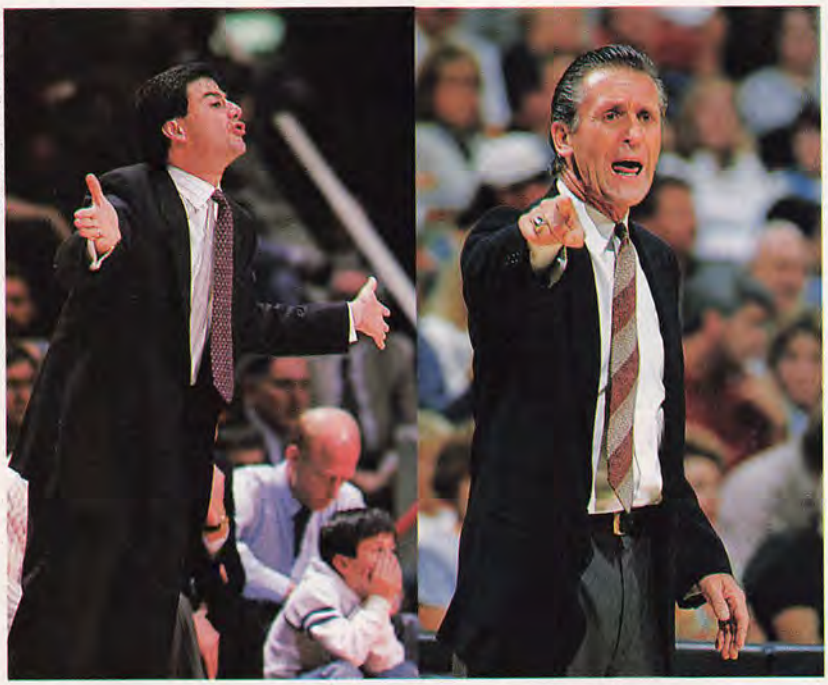
Talk Isn't Cheap

SPORTSCHROME; BOB ROSATO



Pitino

Riley

We all know Rick Pitino and Pat Riley make fortunes as head honchos of the Boston Celtics and Miami Heat, respectively. But in case they're looking to make a few extra bucks, there's always the speaking circuit.

In a recent survey done by the Burns Sports Celebrity Service, Pitino and Riley (along with Lou Holtz) were considered two of the three most sought-after sports speakers. They both get five-digit amounts for their troubles, and the figures could get higher.

"Definitely, the Pitino rate has been going up practically by the day," says Bob Williams, president of BSCS. "A year ago, you could have had him for 16 to 20 grand a pop, and now it's around 40 east of the Mississippi and 50 west. When the person has no need to do it, it makes him more desirable.

"Riley's a little different because he may have peaked with his five rings and experience in Los Angeles and New York. Pitino potentially has more because he's turned it around in so many places and has yet to win an NBA championship to go along with his NCAA crown. Doing it with the Celtics could up his price even more."

It's more than just winning that helps Riley and Pitino earn top dollar on speaking engagements. They have charisma and they promote themselves to the hilt.

"You have to want to go out on the corporate level and do well in it, something both Pitino and Riley enjoy," Williams says. There are many top coaches that don't appeal to the companies—Lenny Wilkens, Doug Collins. They're good at what they do and they're good speakers, but they don't fit as well. Pitino and Riley see themselves as executives, not just coaches, and it reflects in their actions and in their paychecks."

—Mark Balk

COURTESY NBC SPORTS

Parcells

Broadcast News

Every televised NFL game has its requisite shot of the coach on the sidelines. And more and more of those coaches are comfortable in front of the cameras because they're former broadcasters. "If I were running a network, I'd hire coaches off the field all the time," says Will McDonough, the veteran reporter who works for NBC, the network critics have dubbed National Broadcasting Coaches. "They know the game on the inside and they have the work ethic and the competitiveness to be the best at what they do."

Jimmy Johnson and Bill Parcells are two of the all-time great coaches, and they have a combined three networks in their past. Dick Vermeil is leading the Rams after more than a decade of college football broadcasts on ABC. Tough Mike Ditka is now a head Saint after his studio stint at NBC. And so the question: Has television changed them?

No, says Edwin Pope of the *Miami Herald*. "They're intense guys and there's a certain burnout factor, so they go away for a while and talk about the game and then they're ready again. I think they'll be the same with the media as they were beforehand."

"The first year or two away from coaching is a honeymoon period, and then they have to decide what they want to do," adds New York *Daily News* writer Gary Myers, who worked with Jimmy Johnson at HBO. "Eventually, some of them miss being in the arena and they jump back in. It's part of who they are."

Much has been said about Don Shula missing the sidelines, and the Hall of Fame coach, as always, puts things in perspective. When Shula first heard of Vermeil's return, he joked: "That's good. Now I can sit out for a decade or so, do a little TV and then come back and coach."

—MB

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Manning Among Boys

QUARTERBACK PEYTON MANNING SPURNED THE NFL TO VOLUNTEER HIS SERVICES TO TENNESSEE AND A RUN FOR THE NATIONAL TITLE

By Paul M. Johnson

One play. That's all it took to crystallize the entire '96 national championship picture. Texas head coach John Mackovic, up a field goal on Nebraska with two minutes remaining in the Big 12 championship game, elected to go for it on fourth-and-one on his own 28-yard line. Longhorns quarterback James Brown stepped up to center, took a quick snap, then stunned the Huskers defense by rolling out of the pocket to his left and throwing downfield to reserve tight end Derek Lewis for what turned out to be a 61-yard completion. A subsequent touchdown put Texas up by 10 and ended Nebraska's hopes of meeting then-undefeated Florida State for the national title. Florida head coach Steve Spurrier may have been lauded for his commitment to defense and his X's and O's, but without that play, the Gators might not have staked a claim to No. 1. Our bet is that this year's champion will have to receive similar good fortune in wresting away Florida's mantle.

ROB TRINGALI JR./SPORTSCHROME

1 TENNESSEE 11-0 It's finally time. After eight straight years of Volunteers bowl appearances, everything seems to be in order for a national championship. Quarterback Peyton Manning is perhaps the most heavily favored Heisman candidate ever and the guaranteed top pick in the 1998 NFL draft. The most important job in college football in '97, protecting Manning, will be handled by five returning offensive linemen. The most envied job, that of featured receiver, goes to Marcus Nash, who was second on the team last year with 53 catches for 688 yards. The SEC's best defense returns seven starters and features end/linebacker Leonard Little, one of the best defensive players ever to wear the Orange. Right cornerback Terry Fair was All-SEC in '96 and the nation's eighth-best punt returner. Manning, who graduated cum laude in May, admitted that the Vols got caught up in their own hype last year, though that still doesn't explain the 21-17 loss to Memphis. The schedule isn't as favorable as last season's—games against Florida and Alabama are on the road—but the Volunteers will realize their goal of a perfect regular season and enter the alliance No. 1.
BIG DATE: AT FLORIDA, SEPT. 20.

2 WASHINGTON 11-0 The Huskies will have to wait only until Sept. 20, when they host Nebraska, to know if they're in the hunt for it all. Tailback Rashaan Shehee, not NFL first-rounder Corey Dillon, started last season as the featured runner. An injury limited him to three starts in '96, but Shehee returns and ranks among the best in the nation. Twenty-one-year-old sophomore quarterback Brock Huard, a 6-5, 220-pound lefthander who already has NFL scouts drooling, will look most often to split end Jerome Pathon. Linebacker Jason Chorak, the "Croation Sensation," was the Pac-10 defensive player of the year in '96 and is surrounded by seven other returning starters.
BIG DATE: NEBRASKA, SEPT. 20.

3 NORTH CAROLINA 10-1 Is this the year the Tar Heels beat Florida State? Quarterback Chris Keldorf, fully recovered from a severe ankle fracture dislocation he suffered prior to North Carolina's bowl win over West Virginia, was All-ACC in '96, throwing 23 TDs against just five INTs. Keldorf runs the Heels' version of the West Coast offense. The replacement for tailback Leon Johnson will emerge from a group of about five players, including four freshmen. The nation's second-ranked defensive unit returns nine players, with big-time performers on the line (end Greg Ellis), at linebacker (Brian Simmons) and in the secondary (cornerback Dre' Bly, who led the nation in picks last year as a freshman).
BIG DATE: FLORIDA STATE, NOV. 8.

4 COLORADO 10-1 The Buffaloes have substantial retooling to do after losing some of the biggest names of '96 (WR Rae Carruth, QB Koy Detmer, OG Chris Naeole, LB Matt Russell). Quarterback John Hessler (2,136 yards and 20 TDs in '95, when he started nine games), college football's top relief ace, will have the season to himself and will hook up frequently with wide receiver Phil Savoy, a Biletnikoff Award candidate. The defense returns All-Big 12 performers in safety Ryan Black, tackle Viliami Maumau, linebacker Ron Merkerson and nose tackle Ryan Olson.
BIG DATE: NEBRASKA, NOV. 28.

5 PENN STATE 10-1 A national title run is possible because the schedule is favorable; both Michigan and Ohio State travel to Happy Valley. Junior tailback Curtis Enis (1,210 yards, 5.4 per carry) will be the focus as quarterback Mike McQueary learns the ropes. Twice during the '96 season, McQueary was called on with the game's outcome far from determined, and twice Penn State registered W's. The Nittany Lions return seven starters to a group that yielded 345 yards per game last year. Sophomore Brandon Short is the next great one at Linebacker U.
BIG DATE: MICHIGAN, NOV. 8.

6 NEBRASKA 9-2 The Huskers' only significant tests are road trips to Washington and Colorado. Quarterback Scott Frost's improvement during '96 culminated in a brilliant performance in an Orange Bowl win over Virginia Tech. A solid offensive line will be in place for I-backs Ahman Green (917 yards, seven TDs) and DeAngelo Evans (776, 14). The defensive unit returns only three players, but they're all national-honors candidates: rush end Grant Wistrom, tackle Jason Peter and cornerback Ralph Brown.
BIG DATE: AT COLORADO, NOV. 28.

7 FLORIDA STATE 9-2 This former ACC bully will get picked on by the Tar Heels this year. Though signal-caller Thad Busby and flanker E.G. Green return, gone from an offense that led the ACC with 409 yards per game are tailback Warrick Dunn, flanker Andre Cooper and three All-ACC linemen. The Seminoles are known for their retooling efforts, but replacing six starters from the nation's third-ranked unit won't be easy. Linebacker Sam Cowart returns after missing all of the '96 season. To be sure, Bobby Bowden will find some fresh blood to play critical roles for the Seminoles.
BIG DATE: AT NORTH CAROLINA, NOV. 8.

8 FLORIDA 9-2 For the first time in three years, the Gators won't have a direct impact on the national championship scene. The loss of Heisman Trophy winner Danny Wuerffel will prove to be too much for Florida. Sophomore Doug Johnson is the heir apparent and will look for receivers Jacquez Green (626 yards, nine TDs) and Travis McGriff (14 catches in eight games). Linebacker Johnny Rutledge is one of seven returning starters from last year's 14th-ranked defense. Ed Chester and Reggie McGrew form an imposing tackle combination.
BIG DATE: TENNESSEE, SEPT. 20.

9 NOTRE DAME 10-2 Will quarterback Ron Powlus start living up to his billing now that new head coach Bob Davie has vowed to implement a more pass-oriented scheme? Questions exist at offensive line and receiver, but not at running back, with tailback Autry Denson (1,179 yards, eight TDs) finding the holes. Six starters return from last year's defense, including the entire secondary. The front line loses all but honors candidates Melvin Dansby at end and Kory Minor at linebacker.
BIG DATE: AT MICHIGAN, SEPT. 27.

10 MIAMI 9-2 Head coach Butch Davis expects as many as 15 true freshmen to see time in '97, but that doesn't mean it's a rebuilding year. Quarterback Ryan Clement led the Big East in passing efficiency last season, receiver Jammi German (730 yards, three TDs in '95) returns following knee surgery, and Magic Benton will try to duplicate his '96 start (three consecutive 100-yard games). The most hotly contested position will be linebacker, where all three starters were lost.
BIG DATE: SYRACUSE, NOV. 29.

ROB TRINGALI JR./SPORTSCHROME

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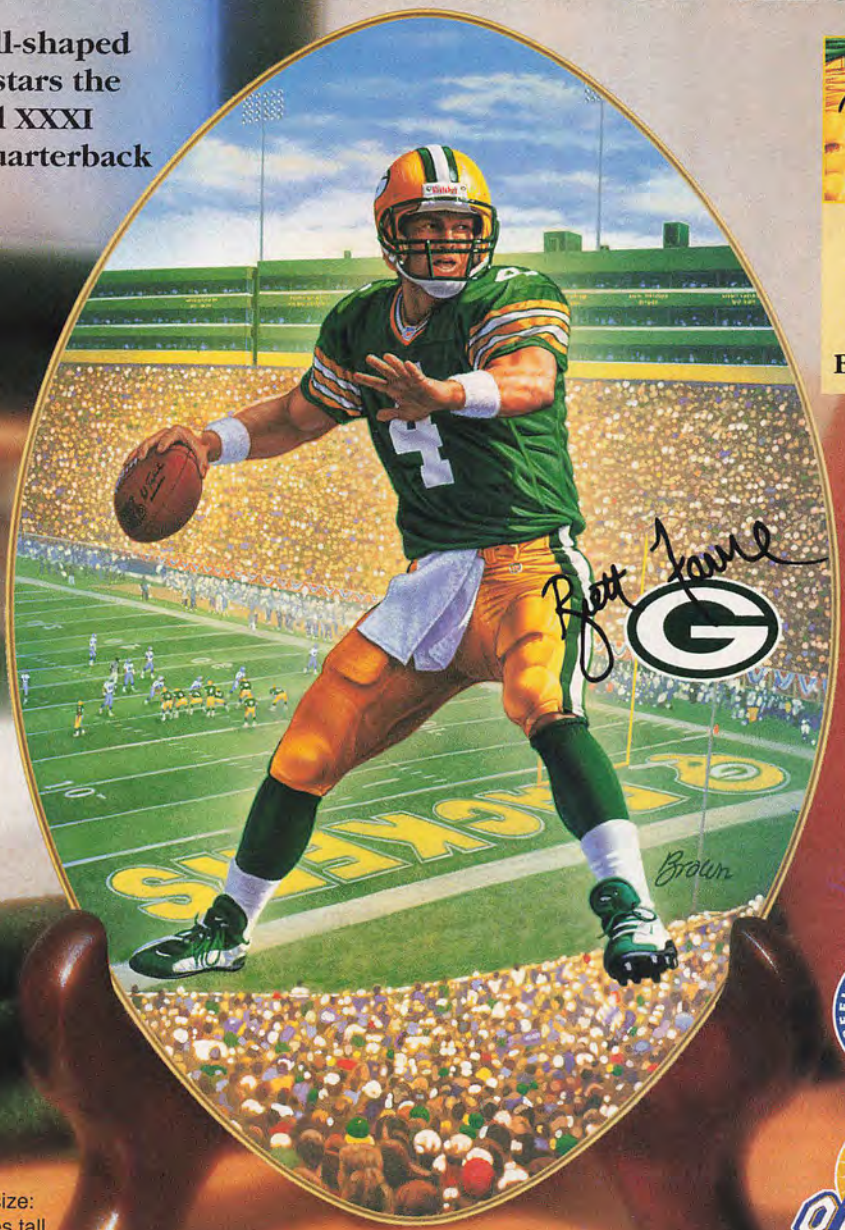

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PAUL JASIENSKI

Huskies "Croation Sensation" Chorak returns as a leader of the Pac.

11. AUBURN 9-2

Offense: The Tigers' top four rushers and three receivers return to a group led by QB Dameyune Craig (2,297 yards, 16 TDs). **Defense:** Nose guard Jimmy Brumbaugh, who's started 23 consecutive games, anchors an unspectacular group (370.4 yards yielded per game) that returns 10 starters. **Consensus:** Four SEC losses this year, like last, would upset the Auburn faithful. **Big Date:** Alabama, Nov. 22.

12. OHIO STATE 9-2

Offense: Joe Germaine and Stanley Jackson compete again for the quarterback job, with a relief role likely going to the loser. **Defense:** There's much more pressure on sophomore LB Andy Katzenmoyer (12 sacks, four INTs) this year, especially due to the departures of Matt Finkes and Mike Vrabel. **Consensus:** A rebuilding year for the Buckeyes won't stop them from sniffing the top 10. **Big Date:** at Michigan, Nov. 22.

13. SYRACUSE 10-2

Offense: QB Donovan McNabb was the Big East co-Offensive Player of the Year last season as a sophomore but put up numbers only slightly better than in '95. **Defense:** S Donovin Darius is a vicious hitter and one of only four returning starters. **Consensus:** Paul Pasqualoni is 51-18-1 as coach at Syracuse, yet many think he hasn't done the job. **Big Date:** at Miami, Nov. 29.

14. LSU 9-2

Offense: Junior Kevin Faulk (1,282 yards, 13 TDs) and sophomore Rondell Mealey (603, 10) give the Tigers a terrific backfield duo. **Defense:** Tackles Chuck Wiley and Anthony McFarland help form an imposing front line. **Consensus:** Beware of the LSU hype machine—this year's schedule is more difficult than last's, yet a bowl game is a certainty. **Big Date:** Auburn, Sept. 20.

15. TEXAS 9-2

Offense: QB James Brown (2,468 yards, 17 TDs) and junior RB Ricky Williams (1,272, 12) will generate the offense. **Defense:** All four defensive backs, including All-American Bryant Westbrook, are gone. LB Aaron Humphrey was last year's Big 12 Defensive Newcomer of the Year. **Consensus:** The Longhorns' only Big 12 test will come against Colorado. **Big Date:** Colorado, Oct. 25.

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

ALLEN KEE/BRSP

FAULK

Offense

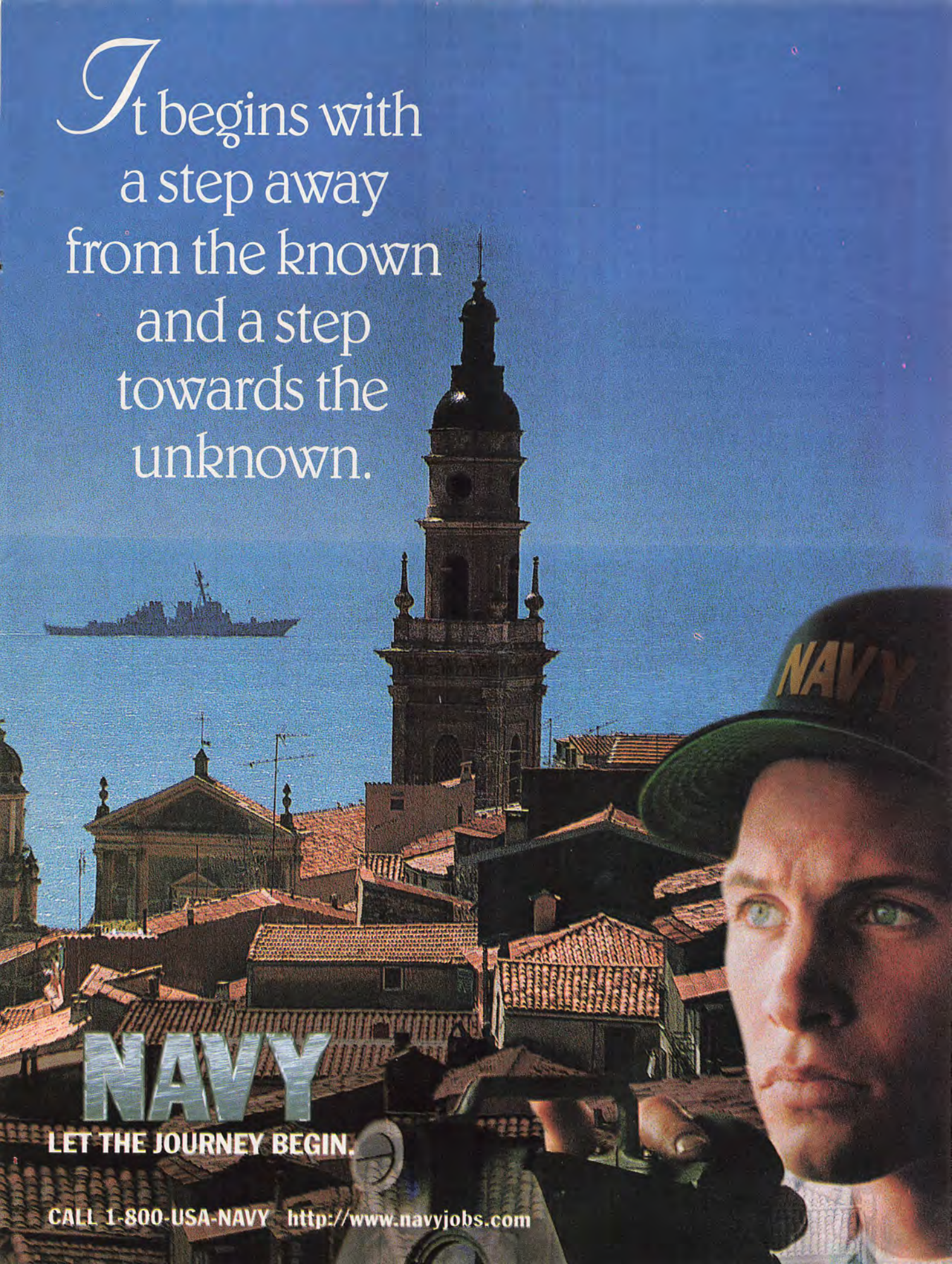
QB Peyton Manning, Tennessee (6-5, 215, Sr.)
RB Curtis Enis, Penn State (6-1, 230, Jr.)
RB Kevin Faulk, LSU (5-10, 192, Jr.)
RB Ron Dayne, Wisconsin (5-10, 261, So.)
WR Phil Savoy, Colorado (6-3, 205, Sr.)
WR Randy Moss, Marshall (6-5, 210, So.)
WR D'Wayne Bates, Northwestern (6-2, 211, Sr.)
WR David Saunders, West Virginia (6-2, 205, Jr.)
TE Stephen Alexander, Oklahoma (6-4, 230, Sr.)
C Jeff Saturday, North Carolina (6-3, 290, Sr.)
G Benji Olson, Washington (6-4, 310, Jr.)
G Aaron Taylor, Nebraska (6-1, 305, Sr.)
T Flozell Adams, Michigan State (6-7, 325, Sr.)
T Victor Riley, Auburn (6-5, 321, Sr.)
K Phil Dawson, Texas (5-11, 193, Sr.)

BOB ROSATO

WISTROM

Defense

DE Grant Wistrom, Nebraska (6-5, 250, Sr.)
DT Michael Myers, Alabama (6-3, 270, Sr.)
DT Jason Peter, Nebraska (6-5, 285, Sr.)
DE Greg Ellis, North Carolina (6-6, 265, Sr.)
LB Jason Chorak, Washington (6-4, 255, Sr.)
LB Daryl Bush, Florida State (6-2, 230, Sr.)
LB Brian Simmons, North Carolina (6-4, 230, Sr.)
LB Anthony Simmons, Clemson (6-1, 220, Jr.)
CB Charles Woodson, Michigan (6-1, 197, Jr.)
CB Dre' Bly, North Carolina (5-10, 185, So.)
S Shaun Williams, UCLA (6-2, 204, Sr.)
S Deshea Townsend, Alabama (5-10, 180, Sr.)
P Jim Wren, Southern California (6-0, 220, Sr.)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16. MICHIGAN 8-3

Offense: Scott Dreisbach and Brian Griese will again battle for the starting QB job. **Defense:** All-America junior CB Charles Woodson, LB Sam Sword and DE Glen Steele anchor a solid unit. **Consensus:** The nation's toughest schedule looms as the Wolverines try to forget two disappointing seasons. **Big Date:** Ohio State, Nov. 22.

17. IOWA 9-2

Offense: With QB Matt Sherman, RB Tavian Banks and all-purpose stud Tim Dwight, this unit will score. **Defense:** Tackle Jared DeVries is the Hawkeyes' best player on defense, which will have to retool its secondary. **Consensus:** The Rose Bowl is a possibility, but road games against Ohio State, Michigan and Wisconsin make it improbable. **Big Date:** at Ohio State, Oct. 4.

18. STANFORD 8-3

Offense: Strong-armed junior QB Chad Hutchinson (2,134 yards, 10 TDs) leads a well-balanced Cardinal attack. **Defense:** A solid front seven anchors this unit, but the secondary needs rebuilding. **Consensus:** Tyrone Willingham has quickly established himself as one of the nation's premier young coaches. The tough schedule, which includes Notre Dame and a first-time meeting with North Carolina, makes a high ranking difficult. **Big Date:** California, Nov. 22 (the 100th Big Game).

19. COLORADO STATE 9-2

Offense: Moses Moreno is the best quarterback in the WAC. Junior Damon Washington, who gained 1,075 yards despite missing nearly three games, replaces Calvin Branch (1,279 yards and 21 TDs). **Defense:** Can it keep up with the offense? Nine players return from the nation's 104th-ranked defense. **Consensus:** The Rams shouldn't lose a WAC game. **Big Date:** at Colorado, Sept. 6.

20. ALABAMA 8-3

Offense: QB Freddie Kitchens will probably throw more, but that's not a good thing. The running back corps is deep. **Defense:** All-America T Michael Myers is one of only four returning starters. **Consensus:** New coach Mike Dubose has a rebuilding job ahead, but a soft schedule will make it easier. **Big Date:** at Auburn, Nov. 22.

21. VIRGINIA TECH 8-3

Offense: RB Ken Oxendine (98.9 yards per game) will try to lighten the load for new QB Al Clark. **Defense:** A strength the past two years, this unit will rebuild around DE John Engelberger. **Consensus:** Graduation hit the Hokies hard, but coach Frank Beamer has built a winner. He'll be hard-pressed, however, to win a third straight Big East Coach of the Year award. **Big Date:** Miami, Nov. 8.

22. USC 7-4

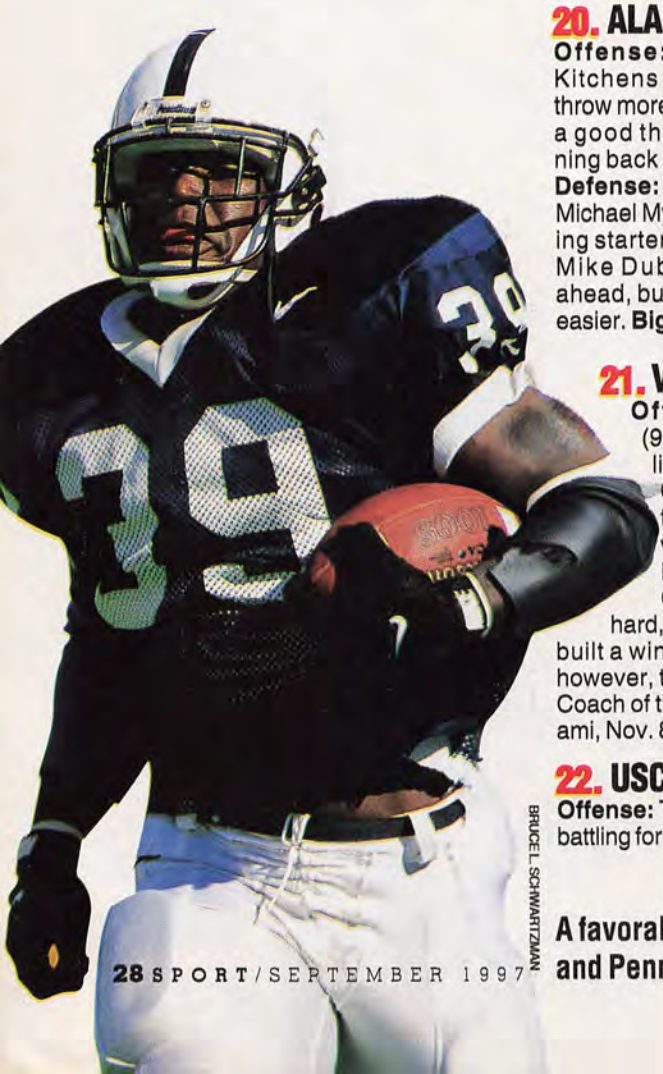
Offense: Three inexperienced QBs are battling for the job. RB Delon Washington is solid, and R. Jay Soward is an ultra-exciting game-breaking receiver. **Defense:** The Trojans have the nation's best pair of corners in Daylon McCutcheon and Brian Kelly. **Consensus:** USC will have an idea of what kind of team it is after playing Florida State on Sept. 6. **Big Date:** UCLA, Nov. 22.

23. BYU 9-2

Offense: The Cougars built a running game last year and will need it again because departed QB Steve Sarkisian has no clear-cut successor. WAC Freshman of the Year RB Ronney Jenkins is suspended for the season. **Defense:** Nine players who started at least part-time return to a unit that was the best in the WAC and 25th overall. **Consensus:** The nation's longest winning streak (12) will end the first week of September against Washington. **Big Date:** Utah, Nov. 22.

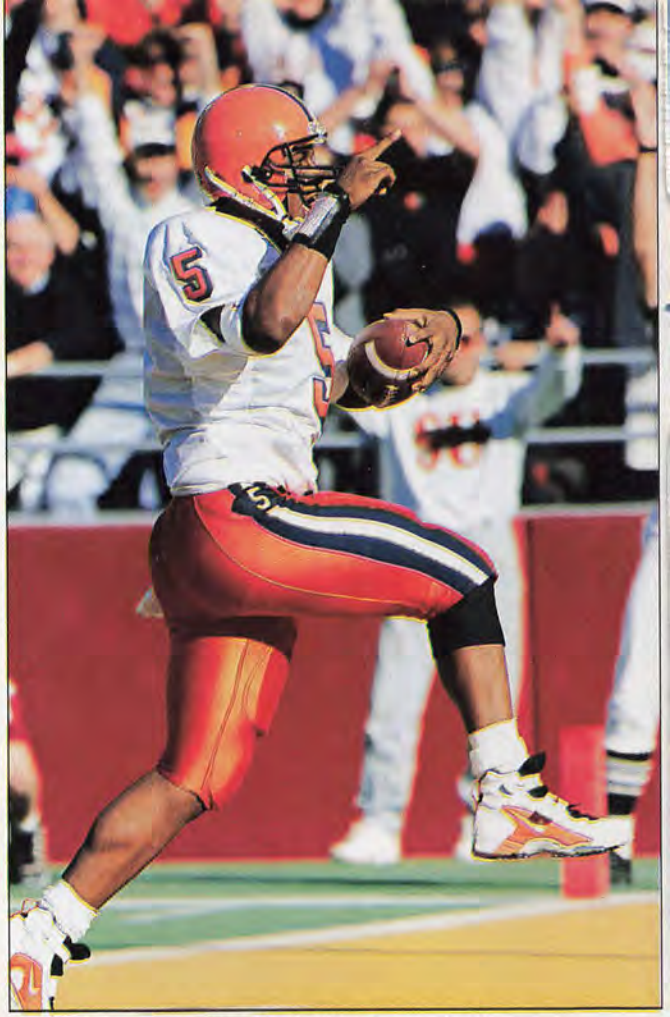
24. WASHINGTON STATE 8-3

Offense: Ryan Leaf (2,811 yards, 21 TDs) is the best quarterback west of Tennessee. RB Michael Black (948, eight) is underpublicized. **Defense:** Usually a



BRUCE L. SCHWARTZMAN

A favorable schedule has Enis and Penn State looking rosy.



BRUCE L. SCHWARTZMAN

No. 1 is reserved for that other team in Orange, but McNabb and 'Cuse are still a force at No. 13.

Bro's Show

Players trying to fill the big shoes of their big brothers:

Adrian Autry, Northwestern—A senior, Adrian will attempt to fill the large void left by the early departure of brother Darnell, an All-American last year who was drafted in the fourth round by the Chicago Bears. Adrian ran for 128 yards and two touchdowns against Illinois last season in replacing his injured brother.

Darren Davis, Iowa State—While a sophomore at Southridge (Miami) High, Darren scored four TDs and older brother Troy three in the state championship game. After following Troy to Ames, Darren saw action spelling his brother and returning kickoffs. He'll be running behind an inexperienced line, however.

Aaron Lockett, Kansas State—An incoming freshman, the younger Lockett hopes to live up to the success of brother Kevin, a second-round pick of the Kansas City Chiefs and the Wildcats' all-time leading receiver. Aaron's not yet as big as his brother—he's 5-9, 160 compared to 6-1, 180—but if he's as acrobatic, you'll be hearing about him soon.

Blane Morgan, Air Force—Blane will be fighting for the now-open job of quarterback vacated by older brother Beau, one of the college game's all-time great option runners. Beau was the first signal-caller in NCAA history to pass and rush for 1,000 yards in the same season twice.

COURTESY OF NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Adrian Autry (left) faces the tough task of replacing brother Darnell in the Northwestern backfield.

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THE CUP WITH THE Cookie Crunch!

strength, this unit gave up 29 points a game last year. DE Dorian Boose is hard to stop. **Consensus:** The Cougars will know before mid-September, following games against UCLA and USC, if they're in the Rose Bowl hunt. **Big Date:** at Washington, Nov. 22.

25. MICHIGAN STATE 7-4

Offense: QB Todd Schultz and sophomore RB Sedrick Irvin (1,404 total yards, 18 TDs) run behind three returning starters on the line, including Outland Trophy candidate Flozell Adams. **Defense:** The nation's 19th-best defense returns nine starters. **Consensus:** Head coach Nick Saban was wooed by the NFL, but a strong Spartans team will make staying worth it. **Big Date:** Michigan, Oct. 25.

26. CLEMSON 7-4

Offense: The ACC's best running game features RB Raymond Priester, who led the conference in yards in '95 and was second last year. **Defense:** Junior Anthony Simmons is the best inside linebacker in the country. **Consensus:** Last year's Lilliputian on the schedule, Furman, is replaced by Appalachian State. The Tigers will struggle with each of their quality opponents. **Big Date:** North Carolina, Nov. 15.

27. NEVADA 9-2

Offense: Can you say "juggernaut?" The Wolf Pack have led the nation in total offense in three of the past four years and was second the other. **Defense:** DeShone Myles, the conference's Defensive Player of the Year, is the best linebacker you won't hear about this year. **Consensus:** Nevada is too big for the Big West, particularly because the conference has no bowl tie. **Big Date:** Utah State, Nov. 15.

28. WISCONSIN 8-4

Offense: Sophomore RB Ron Dayne (1,863 yards, not including 246 in the Copper Bowl) broke Herschel Walker's freshman rushing record but will run behind four new linemen. **Defense:** The Badgers have two great corners in Jason Suttle and LaMar Campbell. **Consensus:** If the 5-10, 261-pound Dayne has a season similar to last, he'll challenge for the Heisman. **Big Date:** Iowa, Nov. 8.

29. TEXAS A&M 8-3

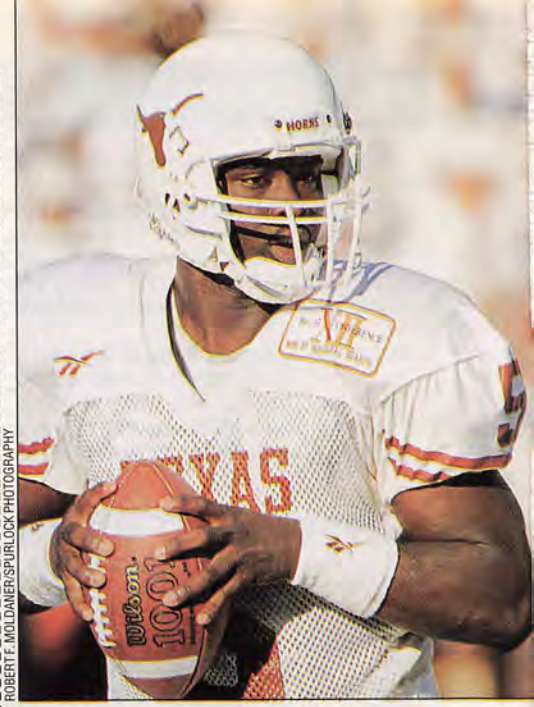
Offense: Nine starters return, including QB Brandon Stewart, from a unit that scored lots of points against bad teams. **Defense:** In six home games, A&M limited opponents to an average of 14.8 points. **Consensus:** The Aggies should be embarrassed over their nonconference schedule (Sam Houston St., SW Louisiana, North Texas). We bet they're not. **Big Date:** Texas, Nov. 28.

30. KANSAS STATE 8-3

Offense: Seven starters, including RB Mike Lawrence (982 yards, 10 TDs), return to a high-scoring unit. QB Brian Kavanagh and WR Kevin Lockett are gone, however. **Defense:** CB Chris Canty and six other starters have departed from the nation's 11th-best scoring defense. **Consensus:** After starting 3-0 (Northern Illinois, Ohio and Bowling Green), the Wildcats will get hammered by Nebraska. **Big Date:** at Nebraska, Oct. 4.

31. GEORGIA 7-4

Offense: RB Robert Edwards (800 yards, nine TDs) and WR Hines Ward—nicknamed "Slash" because he's started games at three different positions (WR, RB, QB)—give the Bulldogs bite. **Defense:** Brothers Ronald and Champ Bailey start at right and left cornerback. **Consensus:** Two weak non-conference games guarantee seven wins and a likely bowl berth. **Big Date:** at Florida, Nov. 1.



ROBERT F. MOLDAWER/SPURLOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

Why does QB James Brown feel good? Texas opens with Rutgers.

SHOWDOWNS

In order of importance, here are the games that will shape the alliance landscape:

TENNESSEE AT FLORIDA, SEPT. 20

The winner here will have the inside track to the title. The Gators won by six on the road last year after scoring the game's first 35 points.

NEBRASKA AT WASHINGTON, SEPT. 20

The last time the two met, in 1992, the Huskies won in Seattle. Another victory here and they'll officially enter the national title picture.

FLORIDA STATE AT NORTH CAROLINA, NOV. 8

The Tar Heels will try to pin all-time ACC loss No. 2 on the Seminoles. Last year, FSU won, 13-0, with its lowest yardage output (213) since 1986.

NEBRASKA AT COLORADO, NOV. 28

In four of the last five meetings between these teams, each has been ranked in the top 10. The Huskers have won five straight, including last year, 17-12.

FLORIDA STATE AT FLORIDA, NOV. 22

After a three-point loss in their regular-season matchup last year, the Gators dominated in the Sugar Bowl a month later, 52-20.

OHIO STATE AT PENN STATE, OCT. 11

The Nittany Lions will face four pathetic opponents in their first five games before playing the Buckeyes, who won 38-7 last year and outgained Penn State, 565-211.

TENNESSEE AT ALABAMA, OCT. 18

This game moves back to the traditional third Saturday in October after a two-year break. The Vols won last year, 20-13, but the Tide has a 42-30-7 overall advantage.

COLORADO AT MICHIGAN, SEPT. 13

In both '94 and '96, this game came down to a Hail Mary. Three years ago, Kordell Stewart's was answered; last year, Koy Detmer's wasn't.

MIAMI AT FLORIDA STATE, OCT. 4

The Hurricanes should be 4-0 when these two meet, but this game will determine if they belong in the national title picture. The Seminoles won last year, 34-16.

NOTRE DAME AT LSU, NOV. 15

The Irish are 17-9 against SEC opponents, including three in a row and five of their last six. These two haven't met since 1986.

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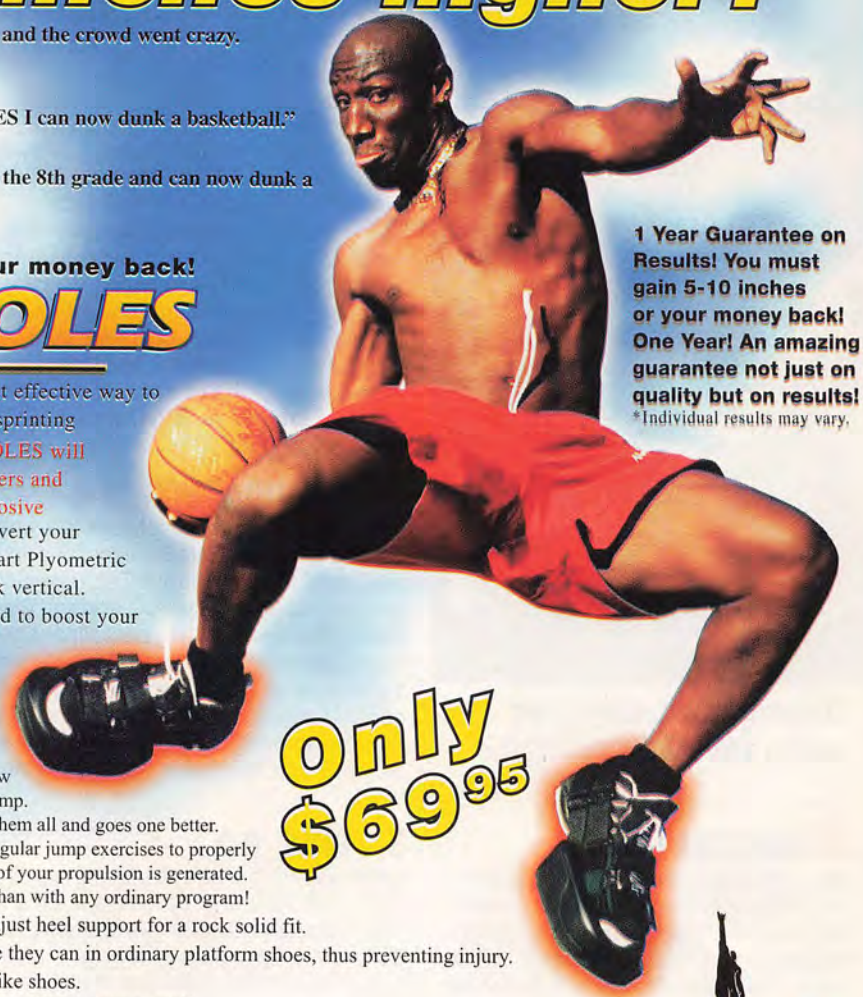

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BOB ROSATO

32. ARIZONA 7-4

Offense: Sophomore QB Keith Smith, a former Detroit Tigers farmhand, is one of the most exciting players in the country. He passed for 1,450 yards and 11 TDs and rushed for 546 and eight. **Defense:** The once-vaunted Wildcats unit allowed 49 points or more three times last year. **Consensus:** Too bad Desert Swarm isn't around now that Arizona can score. **Big Date:** at Arizona State, Nov. 28.

33. WEST VIRGINIA 7-4

Offense: The Mountaineers have two of the best offensive players in the nation—sophomore RB Amos Zereoue (1,035 yards, nine TDs) and WR David Saunders (76 receptions, 1,043 yards). **Defense:** West Virginia had the best defense in the country, yielding only 15 TDs in last year's regular season, but the unit loses LB Canute Curtis and three-fourths of its secondary. **Consensus:** Head coach Don Nehlen has lost six straight bowl games and will get a chance to continue the streak. **Big Date:** Virginia Tech, Oct. 25.

34. EAST CAROLINA 8-3

Offense: Junior RB Scott Harley is the nation's leading returning rusher (158.6 yards/game, 351 in the finale vs. N.C. State), while 6-5 WR Larry Shannon's 21.4 yards per catch also paced the country. **Defense:** The nation's most opportunistic unit (36 takeaways) returns five starters. **Consensus:** The Pirates hope that competing in Conference USA will get them more respect and better looks from bowl commissions. **Big Date:** at Syracuse, Oct. 4.

35. UCLA 6-5

Offense: Junior QB Cade McNown (2,424 yards, 12 TDs), senior RB Skip Hicks (1,034 yards, school-record 17 TDs) and eight other starters return to run Bob Toledo's version of the short passing game, the "Westwood" offense. **Defense:** Shaun Williams continues the UCLA safety tradition. **Consensus:** The Bruins likely will open 0-3, with games at Washington State and Texas and against Tennessee. **Big Date:** at USC, Nov. 22.

36. GEORGIA TECH 7-4

Offense: Split end Harvey Middleton, who led the conference with 64 receptions and 804 yards, became the first Tech receiver to earn first-team All-ACC honors. **Defense:** Two-year starting inside linebackers Keith Brooking and Ron Rogers were 1-2 in tackles in '96. **Consensus:** After contests against Notre Dame, Florida State and North Carolina, the schedule is manageable. **Big Date:** North Carolina, Oct. 30.

37. RICE 8-3

Offense: Nine starters, including gritty QB Chad Nelson, return from Rice's well-oiled spread option, which rolled up 305.4 yards per game last year, third-best in the nation. **Defense:** Because of the Owls' ball-control ways, at least this unit will get some breathers. **Consensus:** Rice was destroyed by Ohio State, 70-7, last year and faces another Big Ten opponent in Northwestern in September. **Big Date:** BYU, Oct. 11.

38. LOUISVILLE 7-4

Offense: FB Otis Floyd and RB Raphael Cooper combine with sophomore QB Chris Redman to form a potent backfield. **Defense:** Seven starters return from the nation's fourth-best D, but among the four missing, three were All-Conference. **Consensus:** The offense must improve after finishing 91st overall. **Big Date:** East Carolina, Nov. 1.

39. NORTHWESTERN 6-6

Offense: WR D'Wayne Bates (1,196 yards, 12 TDs) returns, but Darnell Autry is replaced at running back by his brother, Adrian. **Defense:** Ends Keith Lozowski and Casey Dailey need to pick up the slack left by departed LB Pat Fitzgerald. **Consensus:** Recent success has reaped a recruiting bonanza, but the Wildcats will be in a rebuilding mode this season. **Big Date:** Penn State, Nov. 1.

40. UTAH 7-4

Offense: Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala, the WAC's 275-pound answer to Wisconsin's Ron Dayne, is the best running back in the conference. WR Kevin Dyson ranks among the top receivers in the country. **Defense:** The Utes lose only one of four starting members of a secondary that ranked 17th in the nation. **Consensus:** Last year's inconsistency—beating Stanford after losing to Utah State—can't be tolerated in '97. **Big Date:** at BYU, Nov. 22.

ALLEN KEE/BRSP

Colorado State cracks the top 20 thanks to Moreno, the WAC's No. 1 QB.

Teams on the Rise, on the Decline

RISE

Louisville—Last year's 5-6 season wasn't exactly a setback—the Cardinals owned the nation's fourth-best defense, and the offense showed positive signs. Head coach Ron Cooper, a former assistant at Notre Dame, will face a much tougher schedule in '97.

LSU—The Tigers will take off this year, but a shot at the national championship is a bit of a stretch—LSU lost to its two best opponents, Florida and Alabama, by a combined score of 82-13 last season. A 10-1 record is likely.

Memphis—Four Tigers were named to Conference USA's All-Freshman team, and Memphis enjoyed the nation's second-largest attendance increase in '96 behind Arizona State. Don't forget that last year these guys beat Tennessee.

Rice—At 7-4 a year ago, the Owls had the best winning percentage of any Division I-A program in the state of Texas. On offense, coach Ken Hatfield welcomes back nine starters, and on defense, the top three tacklers.

Stanford—Tyrone Willingham is the best young coach in the country, and QB Chad Hutchinson, a baseball prospect, is a '90s John Elway. Critical postseason experience was gained last year with a 38-0 pounding of Michigan State in the Sun Bowl.

DECLINE

Arizona State—The program may at some point benefit from last year's success in the form of recruiting, but for now the Sun Devils have few good players with experience. The schedule includes some giants: Miami, Washington and Stanford.

Kansas—Three of last year's four wins were against feeble opponents (Ball State, TCU, Iowa State), and that was with standout running back June Henley, who's gone. The Jayhawks' defense surrendered 42.2 points in the last five games. Northern Iowa's Terry Allen replaces coach Glen Mason, who left for Minnesota.

Texas A&M—Not long ago, the Aggies talked about national championships. Now they begin their season with non-conference patsies Sam Houston State, Southwest Louisiana and North Texas. A&M, which lost to SW Louisiana in '96, defeated no quality opponents.

Texas Tech—The Red Raiders are getting into all sorts of hot water in Lubbock lately, and the loss of running back Byron Hanspard means quarterback Zebbie Lethridge will have to pass, something he's not very good at.

Wyoming—The Cowboys won't see a season like last year's in quite a while. They led the nation in passing and went 10-2 but lose QB Josh Wallwork and receiver Marcus Harris. Head coach Joe Tiller parlayed the banner season into a Big Ten job at Purdue.

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JR1J110

41. SAN DIEGO STATE 8-4
Aztecs will win eight games and again fail to receive a bowl bid.

42. OREGON 6-5
RB Saladin McCullough (685 yards, 15 TDs/7 games) must stay healthy.

43. NAVY 7-4
QB Chris McCoy (1,228 yards, 16 TDs rushing) returns to run the spread offense.

44. SOUTH CAROLINA 6-5
Gamecocks return four of their top five leading tacklers.

45. MINNESOTA 6-6
QB Cory Sauter and WRs Ryan Thelwell and Tutu Atwell return.

46. CINCINNATI 6-5
RB Daryl Royal returns to a heavily relied-on ground game.

47. TEXAS TECH 5-6
Without RB Byron Hanspard, QB Zebbie Lethridge will throw more.

48. VIRGINIA 4-7
Of Cavs' 10 All-ACC selections, only S Anthony Poindexter returns.

49. BOSTON COLLEGE 6-5
Top Big East rusher Omari Walker (1,199 yards, 13 TDs) returns.

50. SOUTHERN MISS. 5-6
Golden Eagles' three losses last season came at the hands of three bowl teams.

51. MARYLAND 4-7
Coach Ron Vanderlinden takes over after incredible defensive-coordinator stint at Northwestern.

52. ARMY 7-4
Army hasn't faced opponents this weak since Desert Storm.

53. OKLAHOMA 6-5
RB DéMond Parker gained 1,184 yards as a freshman last year.

54. NEW MEXICO 7-4
Lobos aim for first back-to-back winning seasons since '70-71.

55. SMU 6-5
Mustangs, 5-6 in '96, were 10 points shy of an 8-3 season.

56. KANSAS 5-6
New helmsman Terry Allen inherits a team that finished 1-6.

BOB ROSATO

The best quarterback west of Tennessee is Washington State's Leaf, who felled many a Pac-10 opponent last year (2,811 yards, 21 TDs).

57. VANDERBILT 5-6
Commodores lost by seven to Notre Dame, Florida and Tennessee.

58. BAYLOR 5-6
RB Jerod Douglas will bounce back from an injury-plagued '96.

59. ARKANSAS 5-6
RB Madre Hill tore up a knee again but will try to return in September.

60. ARIZONA STATE 4-7
Midnight hits Tempe as role players from dream season depart.

61. HOUSTON 5-6
Offensive line is Conference USA's best.

62. CALIFORNIA 3-8
Must shore up D that allowed 460 yards per game in '96.

63. PURDUE 3-8
New coach Joe Tiller was an assistant for the Boilermakers 11 years ago.

64. ILLINOIS 3-8
RB Robert Holcombe will run behind an offensive line that returns four.

65. MISSOURI 4-7
Strong running game expected with return of four 500-yard rushers.

66. MISSISSIPPI STATE 5-6
Shooting for a 5-2 start as six of first seven are in Starkville.

67. CENTRAL MICHIGAN 7-4
All-conference performers RB Silas Massey and WR Reggie Allen return.

68. FRESNO STATE 4-8
New coach Pat Hill welcomes back RB Michael Pittman (1,132 yards).

69. OHIO 7-4
The Bobcats return two 1,000-yard rushers.

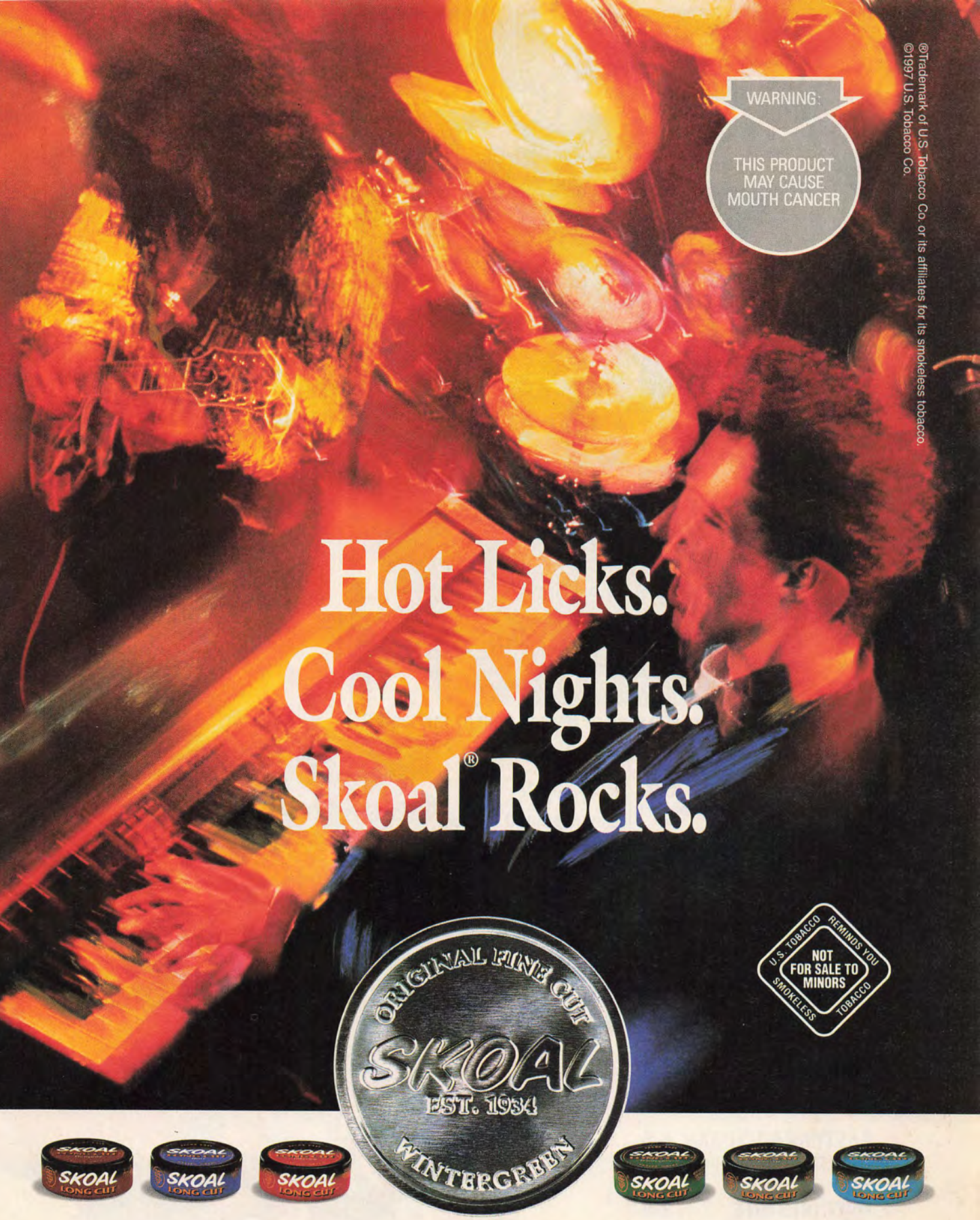
70. CENTRAL FLORIDA 7-4
Junior QB Daunte Culpepper (6-5, 235) has 4.6 speed.

71. MISSISSIPPI 4-7
The effects of NCAA probation haunt the Rebels.

72. MEMPHIS 4-7
Four Memphis players were named to the All-Freshman team.

73. UTAH STATE 5-6
QB Matt Sauk (2,489 yards) and WR Nakia Jenkins (1,397 yards) return.

74. TOLEDO 5-6
Running back Wasean Tait attempts a



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PAUL CHAPMAN/BRSP

Carolina's a national power thanks to Dre' Bly and a stingy Tar Heels D.

comeback from torn ACL.

75. WYOMING 5-7
Cowboys deserved a bowl last year but won't in '97.

76. OKLAHOMA STATE 3-8
Cowboys have no seniors among their 22 starters.

77. N.C. STATE 3-8
Wolfpack D surrendered a horrifying 640 yards to East Carolina last year.

78. AIR FORCE 6-6
Nation's second-best ground attack loses option QB great Beau Morgan.

79. MIAMI (OH) 7-4
'96's D held eight opponents to 14 or fewer points.

80. EASTERN MICHIGAN 6-5
QB Charlie Batch returns after missing most of '96.

81. OREGON STATE 3-8
The breakthrough season will be delayed yet another year.

82. RUTGERS 3-8
Offense couldn't manage more than 14 points in eight of their 11 games.

83. MARSHALL 5-6
WR Randy Moss leads the Thundering Herd into Division I-A.

84. HAWAII 4-8
Luckily the weather's usually good because the Rainbow Warriors usually aren't.

85. KENTUCKY 3-8
Former superprep QB Tim Couch will run a wide-open offense.

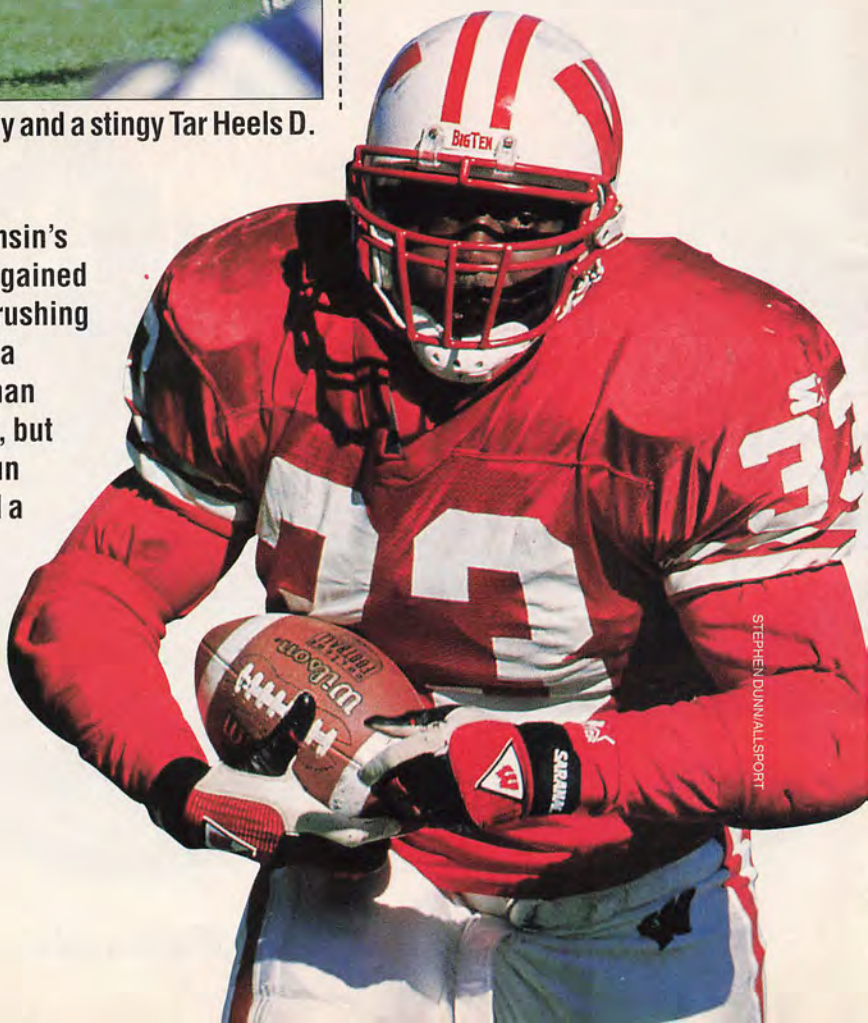
86. INDIANA 3-8
New coach Cam Cameron tries to jump start the Big Ten's worst offense.

87. UNLV 3-8
Quarterback Jon Denton set 10 NCAA freshman records last year.

88. TULSA 3-8
Three good wins—over Iowa, Oklahoma and Colorado State—were among team's four.

89. WAKE FOREST 4-7
QB Brian Kuklick led the ACC in total

Wisconsin's Dayne gained 1,863 rushing yards, a freshman record, but he'll run behind a new line.



STEPHEN DUNN/ALLSPORT

offense and passing yardage.

90. BALL STATE 6-5
Biggest loss will be punter Brad Maynard, 1996's MAC MVP.

91. IOWA STATE 2-9
A different Davis—Darren—leads the Cyclones to another losing season.

92. TCU 3-8
Kicker Michael Reeder won the Lou Groza Award in '95.

93. TEMPLE 2-9
Head coach Ron Dickerson is 5-39 at Temple.

94. TULANE 4-7
A coach at Auburn in '96, Tommy Bowden is the new head man.

95. BOWLING GREEN 4-7
LB Kevin O'Neill is a Butkus Award candidate.

96. PITTSBURGH 2-9
Former Ohio State QB coach Walt Harris replaces Johnny Majors.

97. DUKE 1-10
Can Trajan Langdon play football? Ten starters return to a porous defense.

98. SW LOUISIANA 5-6
Ragin' Cajuns will scramble to fill the shoes of departed QB Jake Delhomme.

99. SAN JOSE STATE 3-8
Spartans will have to grapple with two foes from the Pac-10 and one from the Big Ten.

100. LOUISIANA TECH 4-7
Bulldogs have road dates with Arkansas, Auburn, Alabama.

101. IDAHO 5-6
Vandals are constantly struggling to remain at the Division I-A level.

102. UTEP 1-10
Miners ranked 39th in nation in total defense.

103. UAB 5-6
RB Carl Sanders (1,154 yards, six TDs) returns for the Blazers.

104. ARKANSAS STATE 4-7
Former Ohio State offensive coordinator Joe Hollis takes over for the Indians.

105. W. MICHIGAN 3-8
QB Tim Lester (2,189 yards, 14 TDs) was MAC co-Freshman of the Year.

106. NE LOUISIANA 3-9
Among the Indians' five wins last year, only one was against a Division I-A opponent.

107. BOISE STATE 3-8
Potent combo of QB Tony Hilde and WR Ryan Ikebe is gone.

108. NORTH TEXAS 2-9
Eagles enter their third season in Division I-A.

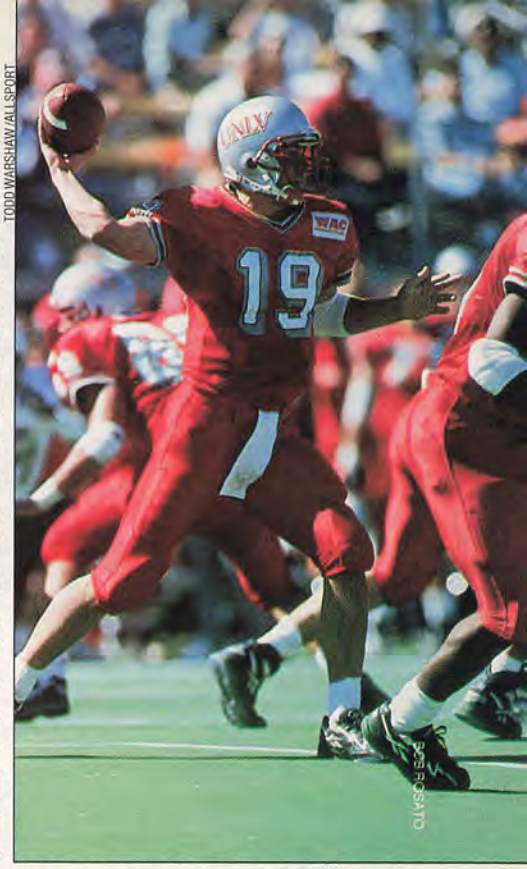
109. AKRON 2-9
Only two starters on defense are gone, but one is DE Jason Taylor.

110. KENT 1-10
Returning are QB Todd Goebbel, RB Astron Whatley and WR Eugene Baker.

111. NEW MEXICO ST. 1-10
Former Nebraska assistant Tony Samuel takes over as head coach.

112. N. ILLINOIS 1-10
Where's Kevorkian? No. 105 Western Michigan plays the Huskies on Sept. 13.

James E. Jacobson made contributions to this preview.



TODD WARSHAW/ALLSPORT

UNLV QB Denton set 10 national records for freshmen in '96.

STAT FREAKS

These guys will put up the numbers, but don't expect to see them on "SportsCenter":

Eugene Baker, Kent—The junior receiver teamed with QB Todd Goebbel, who also returns in '97, for 1,215 yards and 13 TDs, which was tied for second-best in the nation.

Charlie Batch, Eastern Michigan—The Eagles' signal-caller, considered an NFL prospect, was injured most of last year but set 12 school records in '95.

Daunte Culpepper, Central Florida—Culpepper has big-league size and skills and is the best collegiate quarterback in the state of Florida. As a sophomore last year, he threw for 2,565 yards and 19 TDs.

Jon Denton, UNLV—Denton's 3,591 yards and 25 TDs were two of his 10 national records for freshmen. He's the nation's top returning passer, even more remarkable when considering the Rebels played the nation's 25th-toughest schedule.

Geoffrey Noisy, Nevada—Noisy is the nation's top returning receiver (130 yards per game). As a sophomore, he made quite a racket by earning All-Big West first-team honors after fashioning a season of 1,435 yards and nine TDs.

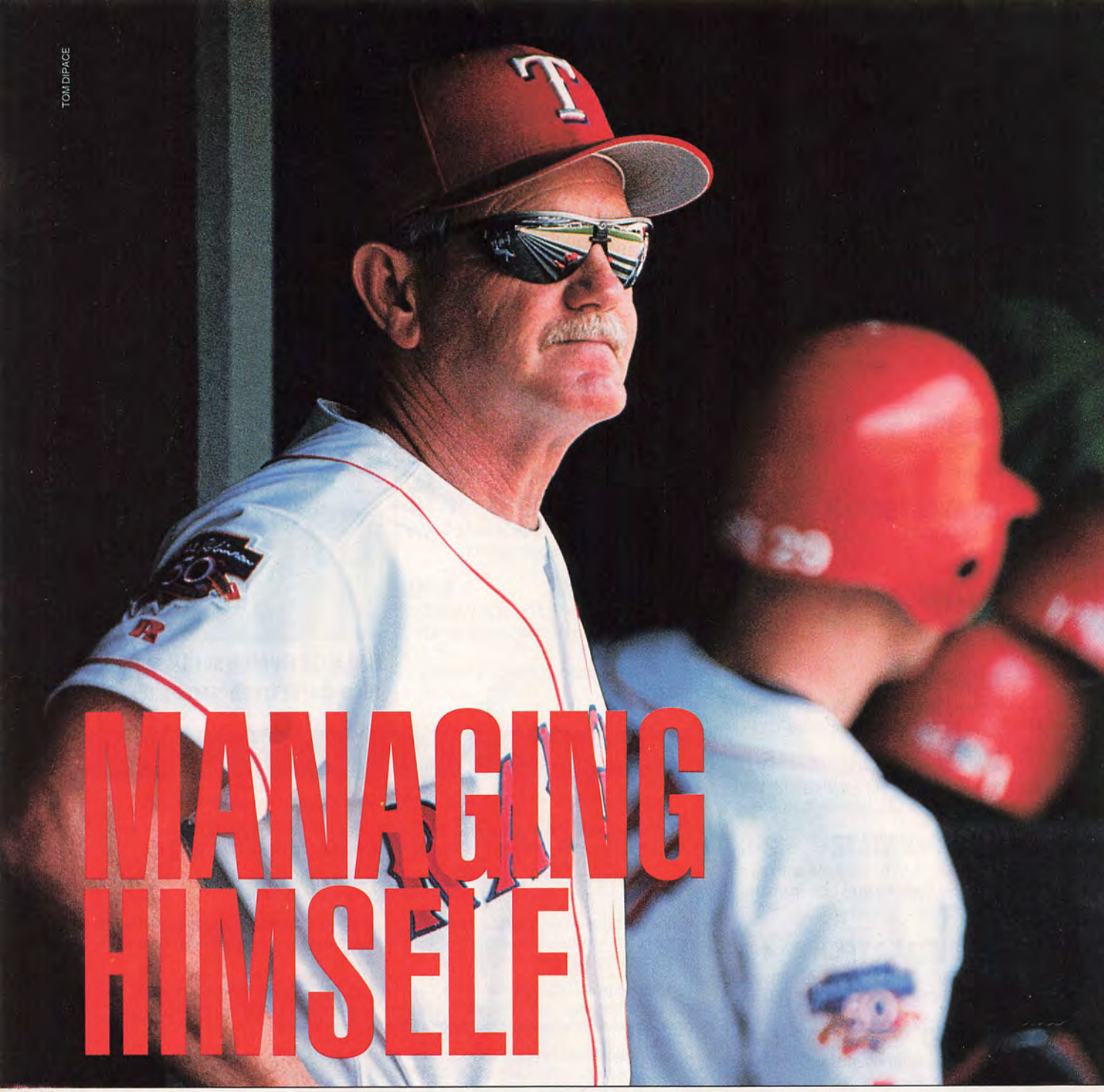
Nakia Jenkins, Utah State—Also an All-Big West first-teamer, Jenkins finished fourth in the nation with 1,397 yards and eight TDs. His QB, Matt Sauk (2,489 yards passing), returns.

Denvis Manns, New Mexico State—Manns, a junior running back, already has had two 1,000-yard seasons. With the arrival of former Nebraska assistant Tony Samuel as head coach, Manns will see the ball more out of the power-I.

Silas Massey, Central Michigan—The 5-8, 180-pound junior rushed for 1,544 yards and 16 TDs last season and is the nation's third-best rusher returning in '97.

Brandon Stokley, SW Louisiana—Stokley, the coach's son, enters his junior year on pace to break the NCAA career receiving yardage record. He's had 13 career 100-yard games.

Kareem Wilson, Ohio—The 5-7 QB Wilson, the MAC Player of the Year, rushed for 1,072 yards and 14 TDs and threw for 567 yards and seven TDs. Against Bowling Green, he rolled up 282 yards and four scores on the ground.



MANAGING HIMSELF

For the Texas Rangers' Johnny Oates, Baseball Was Life. Then His Wife Nearly Took Hers, Which Dramatically Changed His

By Skip Bayless

Johnny Oates was alone at the wheel, driving through the Florida night. He had left Port Charlotte at about 2:30 a.m., just after his 16-year-old daughter had called. If he pushed, he could make Savannah, Ga., by 10 a.m. Then he would fix it, get back in the rental car and drive straight back to the Texas Rangers' spring-training complex.

"I'd always fixed it," he says. "Or so I thought."

It was April 1995, just five days from Opening Day. He would find the Holiday Inn and fix wife Gloria's little problem. This time, he didn't need God. He was in control, gripping the wheel as tightly as he did the reins on his players and children. He would do his fatherly duty and head back.

Back to what his wife called his mistress and he called his god.

Back to baseball.

Little did Oates know that his high school sweetheart, wife of 28 years, mother of his three children—a woman he really didn't know—was about to render baseball fairly meaningless for him. Little did Gloria Oates know that in dramatically changing her husband, she would impact the lives of unbridled Rangers stars Juan Gonzalez and Ivan "Pudge" Rodriguez and even help change the fate of a franchise best known for being a perennial loser. The lord, perhaps, was about to work in very mysterious ways: It took the near-loss of Gloria's life for her husband to finally understand how to win.

Johnny with wife Gloria, the woman he hardly knew

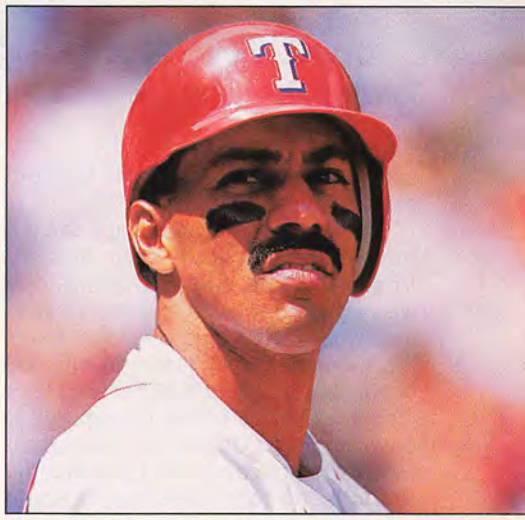
"What scares me the most is that I honestly didn't know anything was wrong with Gloria," Oates says. "Here she was crying out, asking, 'What can I do to make this guy love me?' And the more she tried, the more I ran toward baseball. She had made me her god, and while she was chasing her god, I was chasing mine: baseball. Both of us had lost focus on the real God. Occasionally, I'd ask, 'What's wrong?' She'd say, 'Nothing.' And I'd go rake the leaves or make out another lineup card. All I thought of was the next move, the next game. Gloria had stuffed it and stuffed it until she couldn't stuff it anymore. She broke."

Daughter Jenny had called from Savannah at 2 a.m. She and the Oates' oldest daughter, Lori, then 23, were driving Gloria from their Virginia home to Port Charlotte. But Jenny said she and Lori were going to have to take Gloria to an emergency room. "Mom says she's going to die," Jenny told her father. "But she didn't want me to call. She says baseball doesn't stop for death."

Oates heard his daughter, but he was too busy to listen. Six months earlier, he had been fired by Baltimore Orioles owner Peter Angelos, which left him feeling "worthless." He was driven to prove Angelos wrong and Rangers management right. Didn't Gloria realize what an awkward spot she would put him in if his new ownership found out she wasn't exactly acting like the model manager's wife?

Oates entered her Savannah motel as confidently as he goes to the mound to pull a pitcher. And in that instant, his

TOM DIPACE



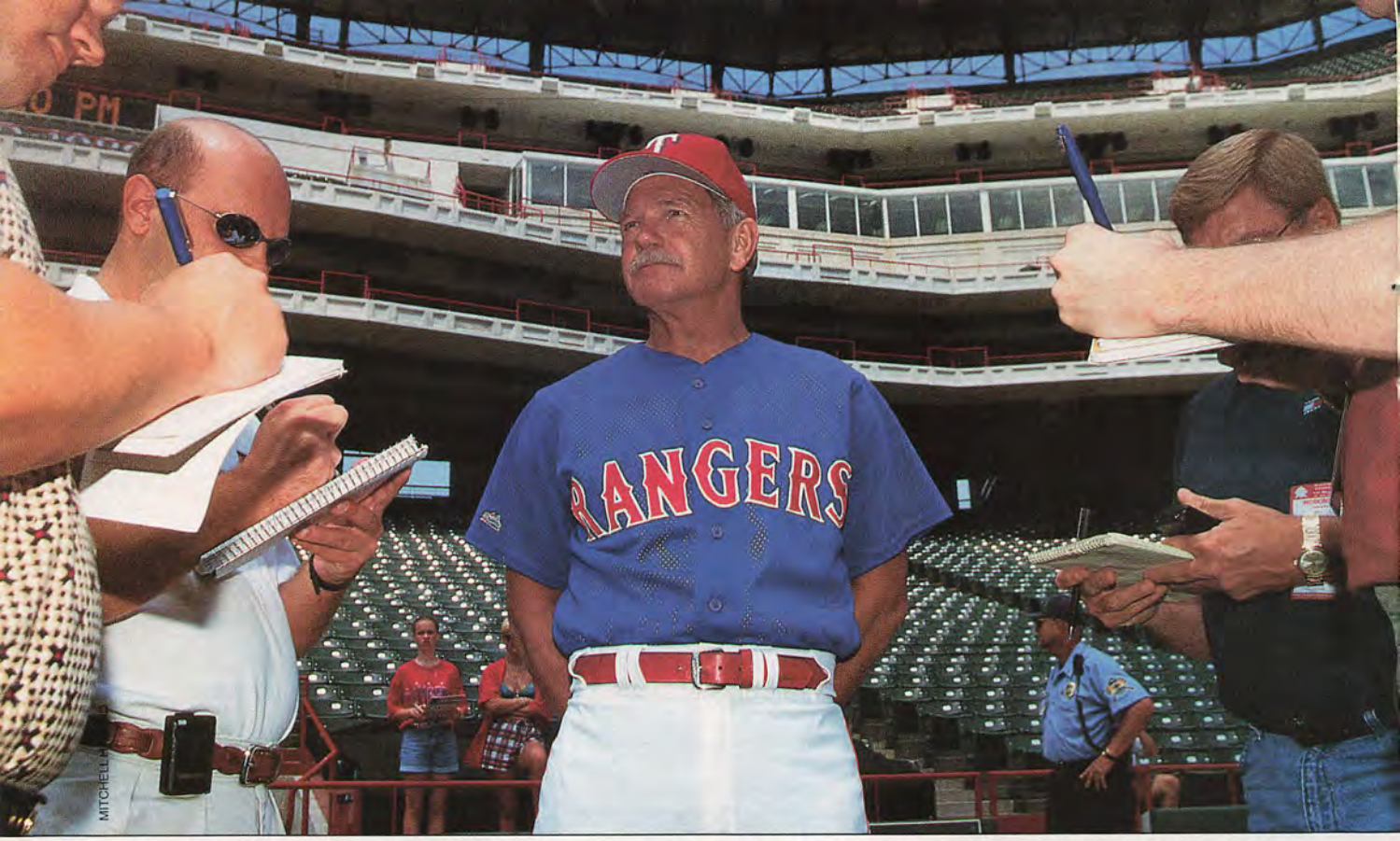
"Gloria deserves a lot of the credit," says Oates, of his father-son relationship with Gonzalez.

"Really," Oates says, "God changed me through Gloria." Only then was Oates able to provide the Rangers with a stability and tranquility that finally lifted them to their first AL West title last season, a feat that helped Oates share 1996 American League co-Manager of the Year honors. Says team chaplain John Weber, "The great message here is that in reordering his priorities and loosening his grip on what he wanted most—managing a winner—Johnny was able to manage a winner."

Yet Oates, one of baseball's shrewdest at giving and picking up signs, was oblivious to his wife's.

life changed. "The moment I saw her," he says, then snapping his fingers, "baseball did not have a grip on me anymore. I saw her in a light I'd never seen her in before. I saw this woman who was treading water with no one in sight, and she was about to go under for the last time. I saw the woman I loved."

On a beautiful day for baseball, Gloria sat on the bed wearing a winter jacket, unable to move. Stunned, Oates tried to hug and speak to her—without response. He held her close and began to cry. Johnny Oates held his wife longer than he ever had—30 minutes, an hour. For once he had lost track. Finally, she



Today, Oates fields questions with more patience and less of the sarcasm that was once so prevalent.

slowly turned her head up to him and said, "I ... tried."

Soon, Oates was back in the car, but he was heading north again, back to Virginia with his family. There, Gloria was admitted to a Christian counseling unit, where she would stay for much of the summer. For the first time, she and her husband prayed together and, says Oates, "made ourselves transparent to each other." As Oates listened to counselors, doctors and, most importantly, to Gloria, he concluded that he would have to quit baseball. He had already warned Rangers management he might not be coming back—a call, says Oates, "I would never have been able to make before."

But after a week or so, Gloria's doctor told Johnny he had to go back, "or Gloria will have to live with the guilt of taking away something you love so much." After missing 10 days—and the season's first five games—Oates returned to the Rangers. Says Oates: "She just needed me to acknowledge her significance and value so she didn't try to draw all her self-worth from me. When it was time for me to go back, I could feel her tighten again, and she continued to have some problems." But Oates' life had been turned permanently upside down: Gloria became a daily priority.

"Now," he says, "we talk more in a day than we used to in a month." Conversations often begin and end with prayer. "We talk about goals, dreams, things that matter. No more of this 'how's the weather,' 'how are the kids,' 'did you get the oil changed?' Friends of ours used to think we only got one channel on our TV—ESPN. Now Gloria and I watch movies. I've found there's actually so much more to life."

Through the '95 season, he slowly left behind the Johnny Oates neither he nor the Baltimore media particularly liked during his four years as Orioles manager. One relapse occurred early in the '96 season when Oates blew up at a Dallas TV reporter who repeatedly asked if Oates thought Juan Gonzalez was faking an injury. Oates responded with a word not found in scriptures. "I apologized," Oates says. "But understand, that was the norm for me in Baltimore, always fighting everyone, thinking everyone was trying to punish me. How dare you ask me that question. One of my frailties is my sarcastic attitude. My family will tell you I can really stab you and turn that dagger. Now I pray every day, 'God, let me control my tongue, and let my actions back up my words.' "

But in Baltimore, he says, "the press

On a beautiful day for baseball, Gloria sat on the bed wearing a winter jacket, unable to move. Stunned, Oates tried to hug and speak to her—without response. He held her close and began to cry. Johnny Oates held his wife longer than he ever had—30 minutes, an hour. For once he had lost track. Finally, she slowly turned her head up to him and said, "I ... tried."

TOM DIPACE

Oates has earned the respect of Rangers stars Gonzalez and Rodriguez, which he says is crucial for success.

pictured me as wrapped so tight I was ready to explode." And he was. A construction worker's son, Oates had grown up poor living in trailers in rural North Carolina and Virginia. Starring in high school baseball had helped hide his inferiority complex. As a backup big-league catcher, he often was so nervous before games that he'd vomit. As manager in Baltimore, where baseball is as apocalyptically important as Cowboys football is in Dallas-Fort Worth, Oates took himself and his game dangerously seriously.

Amid '94 media speculation that he would be fired, a *Washington Post* story carried quotes from Angelos saying that Oates was "an insecure man, not a very good manager. I don't think he is a good leader." In a note of apology addressed to "Johnnie Oats," Angelos said the remarks were intended to be off the record. Nothing like a vote of confidence.

Oates' insecurity raged out of control one afternoon at Yankee Stadium when the crowd hooted him out of the dugout after he was ejected. "I thought the whole world was laughing at me," Oates says. "I sat down in a chair halfway up the tunnel and I said, 'Lord, please help me, I can't do this by myself.' I actually felt the Holy Spirit touch me or I'm not sure I'd have made it any farther."

Oates soon was fired—"released," he calls it—and hired by a strike-damaged Texas team that ranked below the Cowboys, NBA Mavericks and NHL Stars in fan interest and credibility. Maybe Oates wouldn't be as tortured by external expectations, but would he be driven over the edge by internal problems? Not only had the clubhouse become a clique-ridden war zone, but the Rangers had bet their future on the seven-year, $45 million contract awarded Gonzalez, whose tumultuous personal life seemed to make him a better off-field fit for the Cowboys. The monstrously talented Igor—a nickname given Gonzalez in his native Puerto Rico—seemed to have a new wife, girlfriend or injury with each full moon. And here came another new manager, this one an uptight neat freak nicknamed Quaker with more rules than he had gray hairs. Oates, it appeared, didn't have a snowball's chance in Texas.

One night during an early-season game, while Gonzalez was in the clubhouse getting treatment for a sore back, Oates sent word that he wanted Gonzalez to put on a uniform and report to the dugout. Gonzalez, who said he wasn't able to swing a bat, didn't understand that Oates wanted to use him only as an on-deck decoy. When Gonzalez failed to show, Oates marched to the clubhouse and "aired him out. Lord, I was nasty. I said, 'Juan, if you don't want to be part of the team, go home!' "

Improbably, that was the beginning of a beautiful relationship. Oates later apologized. He and Gonzalez began to communicate. Perhaps Oates began to show Gonzalez more of the compassion and patience he wished he had found for his son Andy, now 20. And who was the unsung catalyst in the development of what Gonzalez, 27, calls a "father-son relationship" with Oates? "Gloria deserves a lot of the credit," Oates says. "She knew Juan was searching. I mean, you take a kid so young with such good looks, put him in a foreign country with big bucks, and you've got trouble."

So Gloria suggested Johnny give him some Christian literature translated into Spanish. Gloria is also learning Spanish so she can better communicate with Gonzalez's girlfriend, Olga

The great message here is that in reordering his priorities and loosening his grip on what he wanted most—managing a winner—Johnny was able to manage a winner.

Tanon, a Latin pop star, and with catcher Rodriguez's wife, Mirabel.

"The literature meant a lot," says Gonzalez, who breaks into a smile when discussing Oates. "My Christianity is more on the inside right now, but it's coming. I'm just so much happier now. I'm at peace with Johnny. I've learned so much from him. He understands where I am coming from."

Literally. Oates visited Gonzalez in his hometown of Vega Baja. "I don't want to sound sacrilegious," says Oates, "but as I watched Juan walk down those narrow streets, through such poverty, and I saw those people rush to touch him, I visualized Jesus Christ. You cannot believe how much money he donates to those people for food and medicine. A lot of players of his stature wouldn't go back. Believe me, Juan is a very special person."

Even through his lost-boy days, Gonzalez never missed a team chapel, says chaplain Weber. "Juan and Johnny have both come a long way spiritually," says Weber, "and both have a long way to go."

In perhaps the biggest upset of all, Gonzalez quit wearing his earring on the field for Oates, who has a strict no-earring policy. Says Oates, "I just believe we have to start and end as a team, wearing the same-color shoes, same-color undershirts—and no earrings." Oates was relieved when Gonzalez quickly agreed and added with a laugh, "Don't worry about that fat little catcher either."

Rodriguez also readily left his earring in his locker. If Oates' bonding with Gonzalez was improbable, his "brother-brother" rapport with Rodriguez, 26, is wondrously laughable. How does Rodriguez express his affection for a mellowing Oates? Once a day, every day, Rodriguez catches his manager off-guard and punches him, sort of a Cato vs. Clouseau sneak attack. "I mean, he knows he won't bring blood or break a rib," says Oates, eyes twinkling with pride. "But he always gives me a pretty good shot."

Once last season, Oates and Rodriguez stood side-by-side on the mound awaiting a relief pitcher. The catcher, innocently holding his mask at his side, suddenly gave Oates a quick shot in the groin with it, then said, "Cup check." As Oates bent over in pain, hoping the TV cameras weren't on him, he said, "Pudge, I haven't worn a cup in years."

So how does Oates command respect from an All-Star catcher who feels free to pop him in the privates? "Oh, he knows when I'm serious," says Oates. "I don't like it when I hear a manager or coach say, 'I don't care whether players like me or not.' I do care. I believe I can get more out of players when they respect and like me. I want Pudge to feel the freedom to be Pudge. My goal in life is to have my wife and children see me that way—that I love them regardless of the warts. My children were brought up to think they had to look and carry themselves a certain way because they're the manager's children, and that's so wrong."

Oates' new managerial flexibility even had an impact on Gonzalez's physical flexibility. Oates subtly influenced Gonzalez to back off the weightlifting that made him look much better in the mirror than at the plate, where he was a muscle-bound, muscle-pulling underachiever in '94 and '95. Gonzalez cut his iron-pumping to just five percent of his conditioning program. Last season, Gonzalez dropped 15 pounds, regained flexibility and durability and put up career-high numbers: a .314 average, 47 home runs and 144 RBI.

Gonzalez: American League MVP. Oates: the underlying reason.

Sports psychologist Don Beck has worked with many coaches and managers, from Tom Landry to Oates. Says Beck: "Johnny has no hidden agenda. He isn't trying to merchandise his faith or force it on his players. He just radiates it. Players don't have to share his belief system to experience the calming stability it produces over a long season. There is a basic honesty and civility to Johnny that we've lost in sports today. He's such a refreshing breeze."

Yet Oates isn't one to believe rededicating his life to God and Gloria will ensure repeat championships. "Being a Christian isn't all roses," he says, "but it sure helps you deal with the thorns." Gonzalez missed the early part of this season after damaging ligaments in his left thumb while playing winter ball in Puerto Rico and undergoing surgery. And Oates and his wife and children continue to sort through some of the damage he did as an absentee father. But at least Oates is now aware of the problems—and he's trying to make other husbands aware.

Says Oates: "I am so afraid this is happening in so many households today. Every chance I get, I tell men, 'You may think everything's OK, but your wife and kids are dying because you're so wrapped up in yourself.'" ★

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

"Being a Christian isn't all roses," Oates says, "but it sure helps you deal with the thorns."

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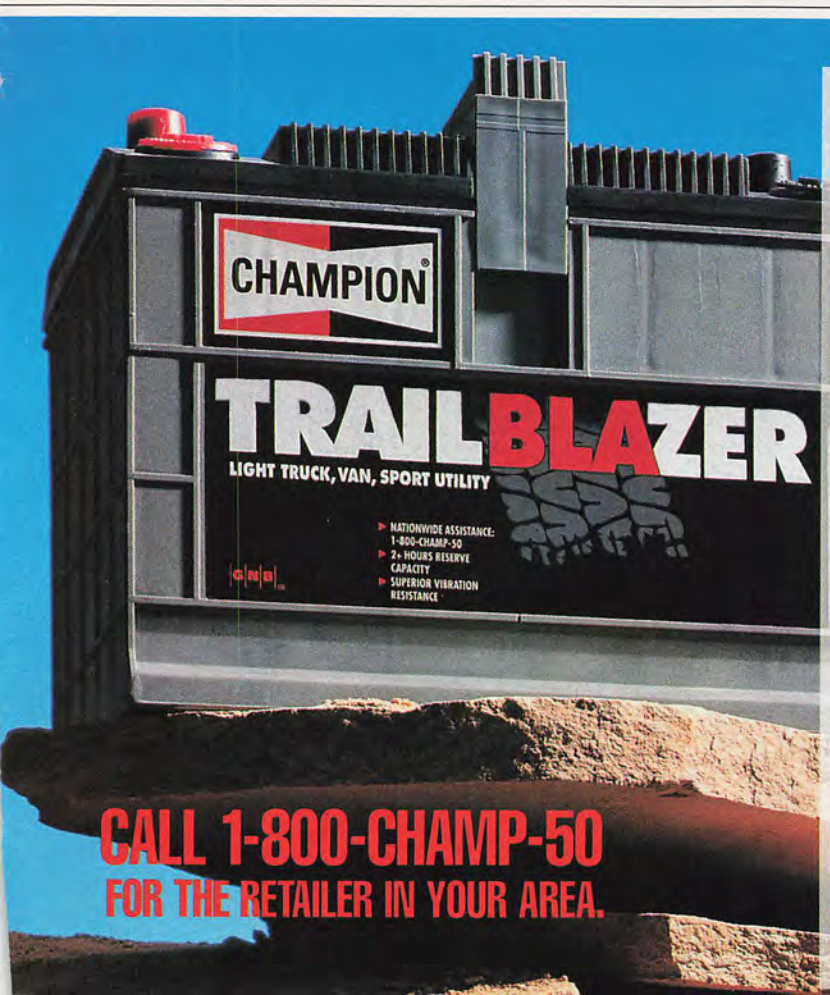

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MISSION AC

The Padres Have Practiced Globalization Without the Help of Major-League Baseball

By Barry M. Bloom

A limousine carrying baseball executives was on its way to Mexico from San Diego for a news conference last off-season when it was stopped at the San Ysidro, Calif., border. A guard opened the door and politely asked the party to identify itself.

"We're the Padres," said Enrique Morones, director of Hispanic and multicultural marketing for the ballclub.

A quizzical look came over the guard's dark face as he surveyed the limousine's occupants. With a deep bow, the guard quickly apologized. "Excuse me, Father," he said, confusing *Padres* for its literal translation—father, as in priest.

The humorous incident underscores the

GREG BANNER

JED JACOBSOHN/ALLSPORT

The Padres broke new ground in Mexico and Hawaii (above). Next stop: Japan.

COMPLISHED

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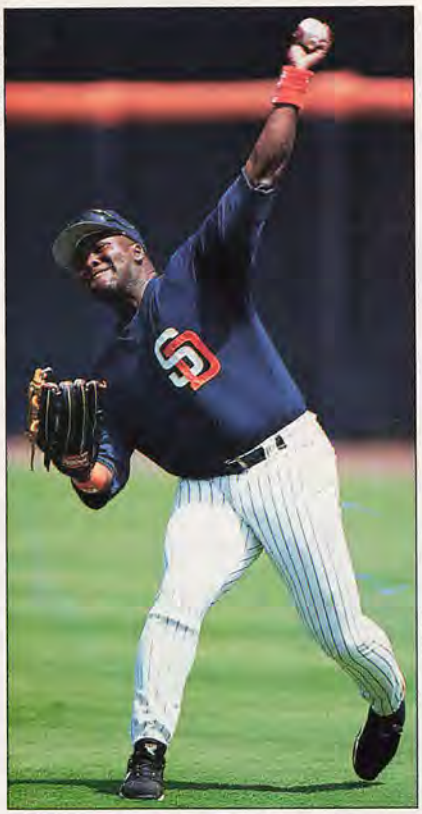
enormity of the ballclub's self-generated international marketing effort. Without any help from defacto commissioner Bud Selig and major-league baseball officials, the Padres are breaking new ground in Mexico, Hawaii and very soon Japan.

They have established a lend-lease player-exchange program with a Japanese baseball team and nearly plucked the best Japanese pitcher this side of Hideo Nomo, Hideki Irabu, no help from MLB. This season and last, the Padres played the first regular-season games outside of Canada and the continental U.S.—in Monterrey, Mexico, and Honolulu, Hawaii—planting the seeds for new revenue and leaving behind only goodwill. Again, no thanks to MLB.



MITCHELL HADDAD

Gwynn is pleased that the Padres, geographically locked-in, are "at least trying to do some things."

Despite all the work, the Padres evidently must still earn name recognition from the local border agents.

"We've done it all on our own," says club president Larry Lucchino. "There hasn't been anybody in MLB urging us. But we get a nice pat on the back after it's all over."

With the NHL, NBA and NFL all scurrying to slice and dice a billion-dollar world market, major-league baseball is strangely reticent on this issue. Considering revenue shortfalls in so many U.S. baseball markets, it's difficult to understand the sport's lack of direction in this area. An MLB-licensed product sold anywhere is indeed an item revenue-shared among the 30 pro clubs.

While Selig is quick to praise the Padres' efforts, he offers only a hazy view of the future, saying he hopes major-league baseball will take the initiative and internationalize by the turn of the century.

"There's no question that when I talk about the golden renaissance of baseball, which I believe we're in the very early stages of, internationalization is going to be one of the key variables," Selig says. "We have a myriad of plans. We're trying to determine a time line. There's no question it's coming. It's just a question of where and how soon."

The other three major sports leagues have had no problem answering those questions. Despite a lockout that shattered the '95 regular season, the NHL still got it together to sponsor a wondrous World Cup last September and will halt the regular season next year for 16 days so its players can compete in the Nagano Winter Olympics.

The NFL has played international exhibition games for years and obviously believes a European presence is significant enough to sponsor its own world league.

Pro basketball put itself on the atlas with its NBA-dominated Dream Team, which included Michael Jordan, Larry Bird and Magic Johnson in the '92 Barcelona Olympics. But its world-wide effort took root in the '80s, and by 1990 the course of the future already was mapped.

In contrast, baseball owners, always far-reaching in their wisdom, obviously have decided that survival of Olympic baseball is not important enough to send pro players. Selig makes it clear the baseball season won't be halted in September 2000 to allow MLB's players to compete in the Sydney Summer Olympics. A World Cup, which the Padres favor, is only a distant possibility, Selig says.

Meanwhile, the Padres are facing a host of problems in San Diego that are forcing the club beyond its traditional borders. First and foremost, despite a massive community effort to reconstitute poststrike baseball and the club's image in a county of 2.5 million people, the Fathers probably have tapped out the traditional sources of local revenue—television, radio and ticket sales.

Since John Moores purchased the moribund franchise in '94 from Tom Werner and his gang of 14 owners—smack dab in the middle of the sport's worst labor strife—he has learned not to rely on his fellow MLB owners for support. Moores, an easygoing Texan, is frustrated by baseball's lack of vision and imagination.

"Don't get me started on major-league baseball," Moores says. "It should be easier for baseball to market internationally than it is for football, a distinctly American creation, and basketball, which is relatively new. It would be a natural, obviously, to play some games in Japan and have a World Cup. But baseball has done almost nothing."

Moores made his fortune—estimated at nearly $500 million—in computer software and rescued a team that was stripped of its star players and losing between $3 million and $4 million a year. Though he quickly rebuilt the Padres into NL West champions and doubled attendance at Qualcomm Jack Murphy Stadium last season, Moores maintains that he has lost $35 million to operate the team since becoming owner.

The hemorrhage is so bad, Moores says, that Werner—who still owns a 10-percent share of the club—has been called on to kick in more cash the last two seasons than he spent from 1990 to '94 when he was principal owner of the team. Recall that it was Werner who presided over the fire sale of players such as Fred McGriff and Gary Sheffield and became a pariah in town for sacking the franchise.

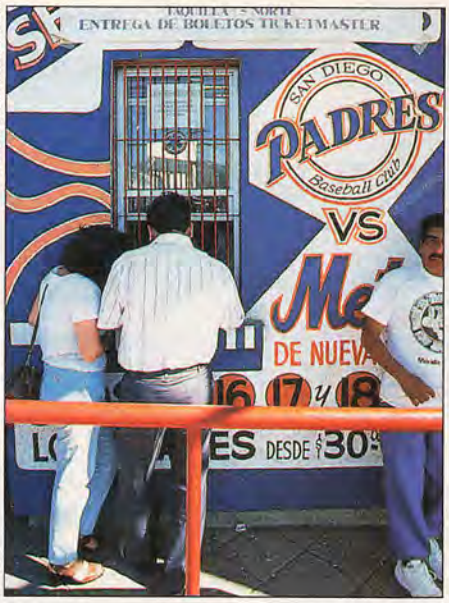
"DON'T GET ME STARTED ON MAJOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL. IT SHOULD BE EASIER FOR BASEBALL TO MARKET INTERNATIONALLY THAN IT IS FOR FOOTBALL, DISTINCTLY AN AMERICAN CREATION, AND BASKETBALL, WHICH IS RELATIVELY NEW .... BUT BASEBALL HAS DONE ALMOST NOTHING."

—Padres owner John Moores

But the club's financial malaise is not just smoke and mirrors. In his quest to build a new $200 million baseball-only stadium in downtown San Diego, Moores has offered to open his books to an accounting firm hired by the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Why? "Because our financial situation is a lot worse than it appears," he says.

This makes Moores much like the American pioneers. His international expansion is not altruistic; it is based on survival.

"It's better for everybody," says seven-time NL batting champion Tony Gwynn, a Padre his entire career. "I'd rather have them at least trying to do different things than sitting around and be like we were before."



STEPHEN DUNN/ALLSPORT

Though a series in Mexico sold well, the Padres haven't been able to lure the masses north to the Murph.

The Padres have long been geographically locked in. The 26th-ranked television market in the nation, San Diego has Los Angeles to the north, the desert to the east, the Pacific Ocean to the west, "and 90 million people to the south," Lucchino says of the virgin Mexican baseball market.

Previous Padres owners refused to mine Mexico, calling the effort futile. The peso fluctuates wildly against the dollar. Wages are much lower than the U.S. standard, making it difficult for a working stiff in Tijuana, a city of 2.5 million people just 30 miles south of Jack Murphy, to bring a family of four to the game.

The Padres did draw 67,382 for the three-game series against the New York Mets in Monterrey. But despite investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in Mexico last season and running 144 buses from south of the border to San Diego as part of a Sunday package, the Padres sold only 43,606 tickets in Mexico for games at the Murph.

But the Padres remain undaunted. This year, the games are being televised twice a week in Tijuana and the Baja on Television Azteca. Open for a second season, the Pads' baseball and apparel shop in a Tijuana shopping mall may break even this year.

Moores, though, would love some help from the league, but he's not counting on it.

"Baseball's marketing is absolutely woeful," he says. "It's getting better, but it had to start from zero."

In Honolulu this past April, for example, the Padres led the charge back into the islands, which are still considered their market area. The club once was affiliated with a Hawaii Triple-A team that moved to Las Vegas during the 1980s because travel expenses became too prohibitive for the Pacific Coast League.

During a weekend in which the Padres played the St. Louis Cardinals at Aloha Stadium, MLB's absence was conspicuous. Selig released a statement, saying innocuously, "This week, the eyes of the baseball world will be on Honolulu." But the highest-ranking baseball official in attendance was NL president Leonard Coleman, who is a big fan of what the Padres are trying to accomplish.

The Padres played the affable host, drew 77,432 for a twi-night doubleheader and a day game, sold out $150,000 worth of souvenirs tailored to the series in one day, and set the stage to put baseball back on the air in the 50th state. Radio broadcasts of every Padres game already have begun. Television isn't far behind.

But the weekend left a bad taste in the mouth of Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa. Says LaRussa when asked if baseball has to take more of a lead in globalizing the sport: "That's a hell of a statement. Baseball should be more global and spread out. But I get a feeling that the *Padres* are spreading out. I thought this was baseball and we're all supposed to be sharing in it, but if we're just spreading the Padres' reach, what the hell. The world is getting smaller all the time. I don't know if it makes any sense to spread it for one club."

It was the Padres, not the Cardinals, who spread good vibes all over Honolulu. The day before the series opened, San Diego players were dispatched to local hospitals and military bases.

The Kapi'Olani Medical Center is the central nervous system of the South Pacific and Pan Pacific, treating and rehabilitating youngsters of all ages who are so sick, a smile from a wounded child is enough to thrill a battered and tortured parent.

Ken Caminiti, whose back was so sore he could stand for only short periods of time, spent part of a morning signing autographs for the sick, the maimed and the wounded.

"You can never really get used to it," he said that day. "You go home and you get on your knees and you thank God for what he gives you. Take care of my kids. Take care of my wife. Those are my daily prayers. You never know when this can happen to you."

Caminiti, last season's National League MVP, is generally stoic anyway. He and a coach and two other players were particularly moved by a 4-year-old boy named Samson, who was born with an acute case of infantile diabetes that must be monitored 24 hours a day every day. What followed in his early years was a staggering series of strokes and heart attacks. Now the youngster is relearning how to talk.

These are the tender moments that the media don't usually see and reveal that the Padres are giving something back to the communities they are wooing.

Considering all those factors, Selig brushes aside the La Russa criticism. "I can understand it, but in all fairness, the Padres *were* the home team, and had really been the originator of the weekend," he says. "Even with the complaints, it was a very valuable experience for major-league baseball."

What baseball learns is the real question. Because of a 30-year-old treaty between MLB and Japanese baseball, Selig promises full MLB involvement if the Padres fulfill their promise to play a regular-season series in Japan, perhaps as early as next year. The treaty is being studied and must be updated.

THE PADRES HAVE LONG BEEN GEOGRAPHICALLY LOCKED IN. THE 26TH-RANKED TELEVISION MARKET IN THE NATION, SAN DIEGO HAS LOS ANGELES TO THE NORTH, THE DESERT TO THE EAST, THE PACIFIC OCEAN TO THE WEST ... AND 90 MILLION PEOPLE TO THE SOUTH.

If baseball ever expands outside the continental United States, both Monterrey and Honolulu have proven themselves as viable candidates for a club, based on the Padres' experience, Selig adds.

"There's no question in my mind that this is the next great opportunity for major-league baseball," Selig says. "I think it's awesome."

The Fathers certainly give their blessing. ★

The Best of the NFL

From Barry to Jerry, Lambeau to LeBeau, Here's the Best, the Very Best, and Nothing But the Best in Football

By Jim Armstrong

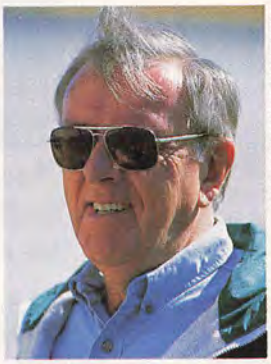
BY NOW, EVERYONE OUTSIDE TEXAS KNOWS THE Green Bay Packers are the NFL's best team. And anybody who can tell a football from a Foosball knows that Brett Favre is the league's best player too.

But then, SPORT's mission always has been to take a Lambeau leap beyond the obvious. To boldly go where no couch potato has gone before. To provide the X's, the O's, the ins, the outs and the in-betweens of pro football. To answer such deep questions as, What stadium has the best brats in the league?

We now present SPORT's 1997 rankings of the best of the best in the NFL, from the best coach to the best capologist to—can we get a hubba, hubba from the congregation?—the best cheerleaders.

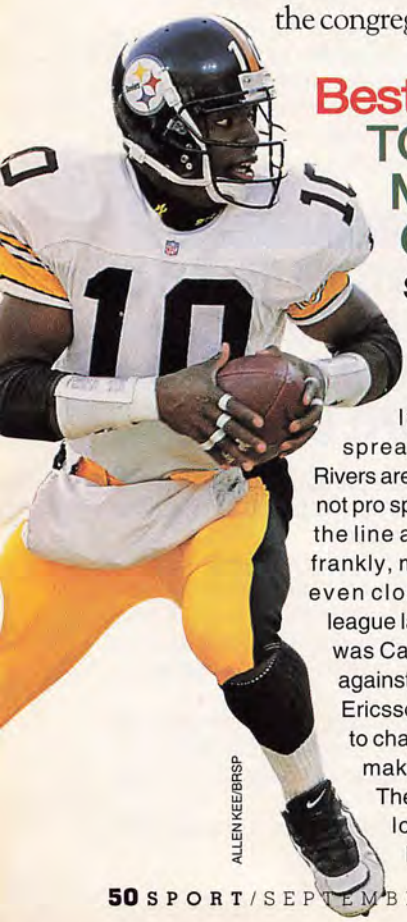
Best GENERAL MANAGER

Ron Wolf, Packers



DALE E. TAIT-SPORT/GRAPHICS

Free agency figured to be disastrous for the Packers, since it offered black players a chance to escape to more socially desirable places than the northwoods of Wisconsin. Instead, Wolf made the move that, five years later, still stands as the most astute signing of the free-agency era. Acquiring Reggie White, however, was just one of his signature moves. He also hired Mike Holmgren and made the most one-sided trade since the Herschel Walker deal, acquiring Favre from Atlanta for a mid first-rounder.



ALLEN KEE/BRSP

Best TEAM TO BET THE MORTGAGE ON

Steelers

What about the Packers at Lambeau, you ask? They were 8-0 straight up, but only 5-3 against the point spread. The Steelers at Three Rivers are the best bet in pro football, if not pro sports. They were 8-1 against the line at home last season, and, frankly, most of the games weren't even close. The best team in the league last season, home and road, was Carolina, which finished 12-4 against the spread, including 7-1 at Ericsson Stadium. But that figures to change this season. The oddsmakers are like everyone else. They know the Panthers are no longer an expansion team. Free agency saw to that.

Best CHEERLEADERS

Chargers

There's some serious talent among the Charger Girls. And they can dance a little too. Actually, they're well above the learning curve when it comes to their dancing ability. But that only makes sense. With the Raiders and Rams gone from Los Angeles, the Chargers have their pick of women from Southern California. At last look, there were five former Rams cheerleaders on the squad. These aren't cheerleaders in the traditional sense; they're patterned after the Laker Girls. Even if you just fell off a magazine page, if you don't have extensive experience in a wide array of dancing, you need not apply.

ROB TRINGALI JR./SPORTSCHROME

ALLEN KEE/BRSP

Best STADIUM, NEW-ERA DIVISION

Ericsson Stadium, N.C.

It was built largely through permanent seat licenses, the bane of sports fans in the '90s, but at least football fans in the Carolinas got an incredible stadium out of the deal. Every owner looking for a new stadium views Ericsson as the prototypical NFL cathedral of the late '90s. It has it all: fan amenities, luxury suites, club seats, state-of-the-art scoreboards, replay monitors, the works. The sight lines are fabulous, and every seat has a cup and program holder. And if you haven't gotten around to starting that diet, don't sweat it. The seats are wide enough to accommodate some of the nut cases from the Dawg Pound in Cleveland.

Best STADIUM, NOSTALGIA DIVISION

Lambeau Field, Green Bay

Welcome to the Wrigley Field of the NFL. Invariably, first-time visitors to Lambeau cast their eyes on the patch of field where Bart Starr followed Jerry Kramer into the end zone to win the Ice Bowl. The names on the ring above the field comprise a history book of pro football: Hutson, Starr, Taylor, Hornung, Adderley. It was enough for President Clinton, on a campaign stop in northern Wisconsin, to ask for a private tour.

RICH KANE/SPORTSCHROME

Best COLLEGE SCOUT

Tom Donahoe, Steelers

PETER MURDOCK/NFL PHOTOS

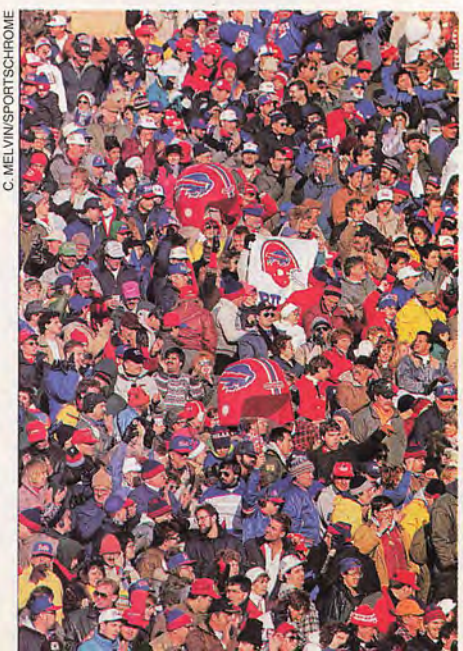
Donahoe is your classic low-profile guy who produces big results. Don't bother looking for his bio in the Steelers' media guide. His name appears once, amid dozens of other names in the staff directory. Donahoe's title is director of football operations, but he's the guy who runs the Steelers' drafts. Donahoe, a former Pittsburgh high school coach, has been scouting for the Steelers for 12 years. How successful has he been? The team finished the 1996 season with 34 draft picks on its roster, more than any other NFL team—and that doesn't count Greg Lloyd and former No. 1 pick Mark Bruener, who were on I.R. Since 1990, 11 different Pittsburgh draft picks have played in the Pro Bowl.

Best FANS

Bills

Where else but Buffalo could an offensive tackle (Glenn Parker), a special-teams player (Steve Tasker) and a backup quarterback (Frank Reich) have their own radio or TV shows? No other fans in the NFL have lived with the disappointment that Bills fans have, but they keep showing up and making noise. In fact, after leading the league in attendance for four consecutive seasons, the Bills honored the paying customers in 1992 by putting a "12th man" on the Rich Stadium Wall of Fame. Now if they could just take O.J.'s name down.

C. MELVIN/SPORTSCHROME



COURTESY OF MIAMI DOLPHINS

Best MEDIA DIRECTOR

Harvey Greene, Dolphins

His claim to fame will always be that he left his job as the New York Yankees' P.R. director on his own terms, without being fired by owner George Steinbrenner. But Greene also is famous for his passion for sports and his ability to handle larger-than-life personalities and the egos that accompany them. Since leaving the Bronx, he's worked with Don Shula, Jimmy Johnson and Dan Marino. Oh yes, then there's the matter of his annual media guide, the *War and Peace* of sports publications. Last year's version had 544 pages—the Steelers had 172.

Best OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

Jon Gruden, Eagles

The Packers, with Favre at quarterback, ranked fifth in the league in offense in 1996. The Eagles, with Rodney Peete and Ty Detmer at quarterback, ranked fourth under Gruden. That's all you need to know, but since he's destined to become a head coach in the next few years, you might as well get to know him better. For one thing, Gruden is younger than some of his players. He was 31 when Ray Rhodes hired him away from Green Bay, where he was weaned by Mike Holmgren in the ways of the West Coast offense. Since then, Gruden has gone through three quarterbacks—he inherited Randall Cunningham—and overcome a changing of the guards and almost every other position on the offensive line.

COURTESY OF PHILADELPHIA EAGLES/ED MAHAN

Best TEAM AT HANDLING THE SALARY CAP

Broncos

PAUL CHAPMAN/BRSP

It's quickly becoming a rite of winter in the Rockies. Mike Shanahan says the Broncos can't afford water for the hot tub, then proceeds to sign a pile of big-name free agents. This year's class includes Pro Bowl defensive end Neil Smith, defensive tackle Keith Traylor and cornerback Darrien Gordon. How adept is Shanahan at working the cap? Everybody else loses players to the expansion teams, but Shanahan takes players from them. But then, he has an advantage on the competition. John Elway, still in search of a Super Bowl victory, has told the front office he'll restructure his contract at the drop of a helmet if it means acquiring an impact player.

Best DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

COURTESY OF BENGALS

Dick LeBeau, Bengals

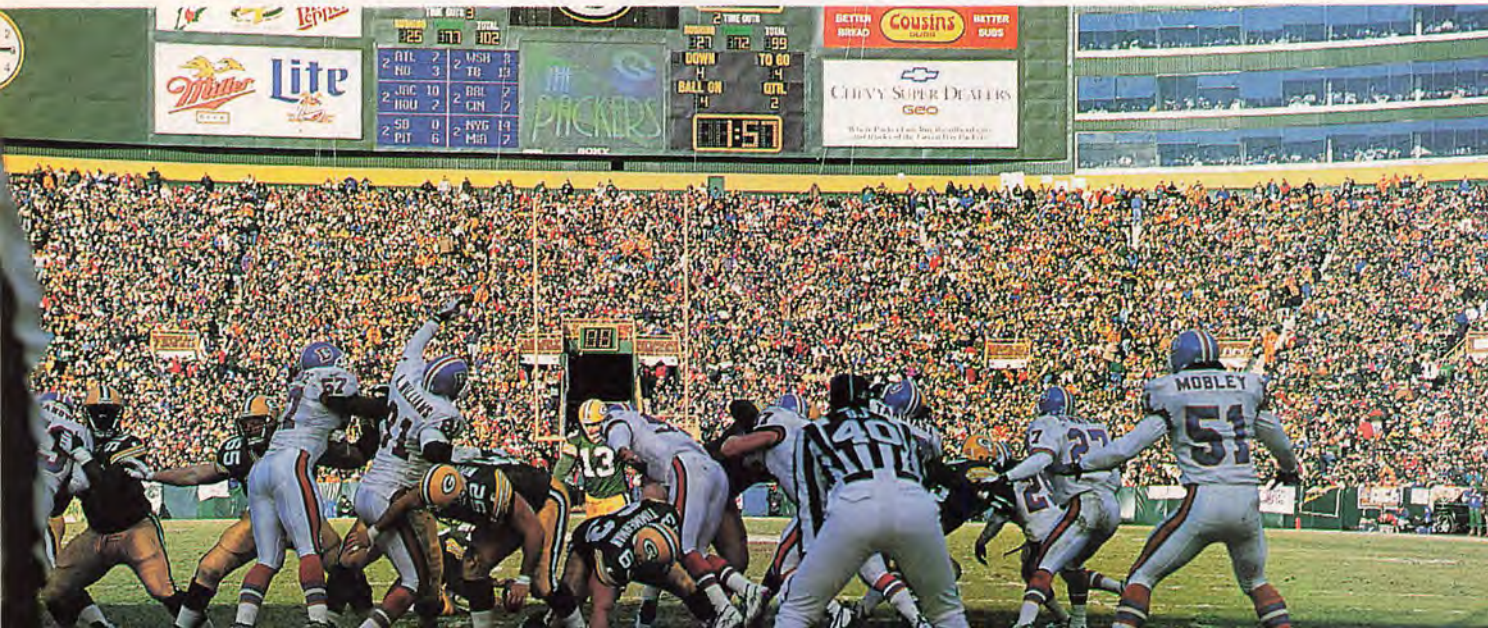
It isn't easy being innovative in the '90s, since every successful concept has long since been copied. But LeBeau, who's seen it all in his 38 years as a player and coach, dares to be different. He's the master of the zone blitz and is one of only four NFL coordinators to use a 3-4 alignment. With LeBeau calling the shots last season, the Steelers ranked second behind the Packers in defense, and their 40 takeaways ranked second in the AFC. Who was first? The Bengals, with 44. By season's end, LeBeau's departure from Pittsburgh—he wanted to return to Cincinnati, where he coached from 1980 to '91—could prove to be the most significant move of the year on the coaching front.

DALE E. TAIT-SPORT/GRAPHICS

Best HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE

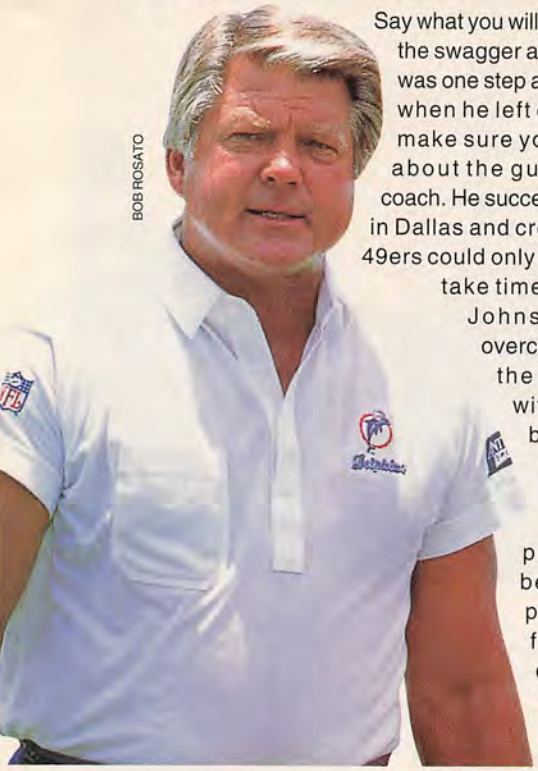
Lambeau Field, Green Bay

You might have an outside chance in September or October, but the Pack is all but unbeatable in the Wisconsin winter. Nobody throws a bad-weather ball better than Favre. In fact, he's won 19 consecutive home starts, four in the playoffs, when the temperature has been 35 or below. In those games, he's completed 389 of 592 passes for 4,608 yards, 42 touchdowns and just nine interceptions.



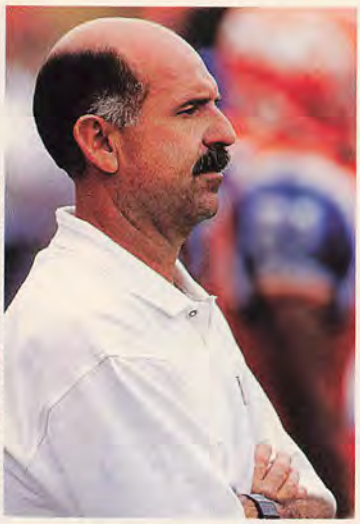
Best COACH

Jimmy Johnson, Dolphins



BOB ROSATO

Say what you will about the hair and the swagger and the fact that he was one step ahead of the posse when he left college ball. But make sure you get in the part about the guy being a great coach. He succeeded Tom Landry in Dallas and created a team the 49ers could only hope to be. It will take time in Miami, since Johnson will have to overcome the mistakes the Dolphins made with the salary cap before he arrived, but he'll get it done there. Don't be surprised if Johnson becomes a major player in the race for Tennessee quarterback Peyton Manning, who wants to play in Miami or Denver.



COURTESY OF DENVER BRONCOS/ERIC LARS BAKKE

Best TRAINER

Steve Antonopulos, Broncos

Why are trainers on our list? Because under the salary-cap system, they've become increasingly important to their teams. Since teams typically can't fit starting-caliber players under the cap to replace injured ones, keeping players healthy is more crucial than ever. Antonopulos is a veteran of the trainer's room, having been with the Broncos since the days of John Ralston. How good is he at his job? Consider this: The Broncos had no one on injured reserve during the 1996 season. That meant the front office didn't have to spend a penny of its cap money on players who weren't on the field.

Best TRAINING FACILITY

Dolphins

COURTESY OF MIAMI DOLPHINS/DAVE CROSS

Miami's complex in Davie, Fla., is strictly Boardwalk and Park Place material. For all its amenities, its most important quality is space, a big consideration considering a lot of the employees weigh 300 pounds. Half the roster can fit in the sauna and steam rooms. The others can bide their time in the 1,000-square-foot players lounge or the 225-square-foot jacuzzi. After soothing their aches and pains in the jacuzzi, players can slip into the 80-square-foot cold-water plunge. Strength coaches ideally like to have a weight room that provides 100 square feet per player. The Dolphins have 7,500 square feet, enough for the players, coaches and beer vendors at Pro Player Stadium.

ALLEN KEE/BRSP

Best ROAD SHOW

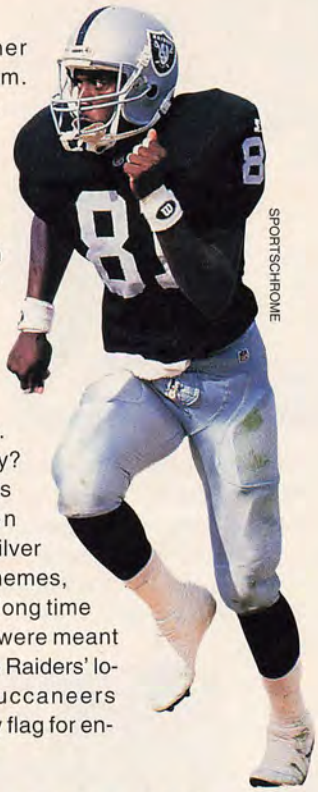
Oilers

Regardless of where the Oilers call home, they've proven they can win on the road. They were 6-2 straight up and against the point spread last season when they ventured away from the Astrodome. Hmmm, maybe that's it. Maybe they couldn't tell the difference between a home game and a road game. Maybe the fact that there were more cockroaches than fans watching them in the Dome made them feel at home away from home. In fact, the Oilers were the only team in the league last season with a road-field advantage. They were 2-6 at home, second-worst in the league to those loathable losers, the Jets.

The Best of the NFL

Best UNIFORMS

Raiders



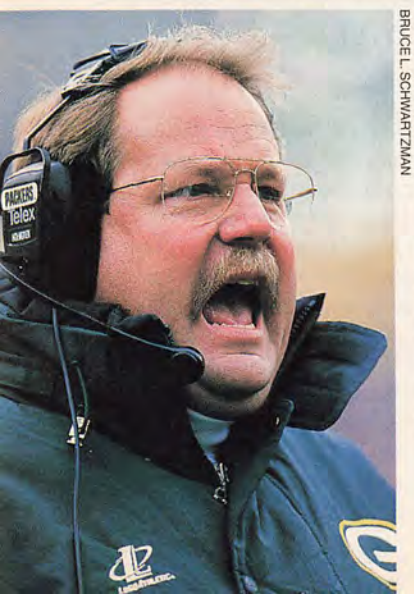
SPORTSCHROME

With Al Davis, you either love him or you hate him. But even Al's harshest critics have to give him this: He knows a good-looking uniform when he sees one. Unlike most NFL teams—even the Packers, who switched to numbers on their pants a few years ago—the Raiders haven't changed their look since the mid-1960s. But then, why would they? Teams across the sports landscape have been switching to black and silver as part of their color schemes, but Davis figured out a long time ago that the two colors were meant for each other. As for the Raiders' logo, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers should receive a penalty flag for encroachment.

Best OFF-SEASON DECISION

Mike Holmgren, Packers

If the Packers don't repeat this season, it won't be because they fell asleep reading their own press clippings. Holmgren has gone out of his way to ensure that he and his players are able to get back to thinking football after last season's trip to Fantasy Island. First, he canceled his own radio and TV shows because they took up too much of his time. He also has instituted a policy whereby radio and TV stations have to clear it with the front office if they want a player to have his own show. Finally, there was the little matter of the street the city fathers wanted to name after Holmgren, a la Lombardi Avenue. Thanks, Holmgren said, but not just yet.



BRUCE L. SCHWARTZMAN

COURTESY OF NBC SPORTS

Best ANNOUNCING TEAM

Dick Enberg, Paul Maguire, Phil Simms and Jim Gray, NBC

COURTESY NBC SPORTS/MONIKA NIKORE

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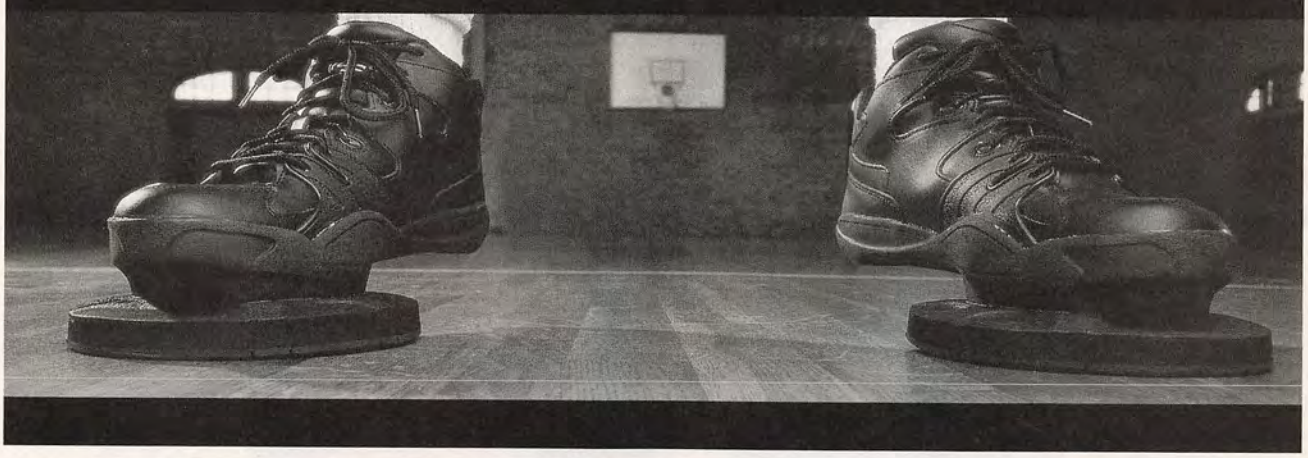
BRIAN SPURLOCK

Best COVER SPEED

Deion Sanders, Cowboys

Sometimes football statistics can be misleading. Take the case of Neon Deion. He finished tied for 76th in the NFL with two interceptions last season. A $13 million signing bonus for that? Well, yeah, now that you mention it. Every quarterback with cable knows that Deion, at 30, is still the best cover man in the league. That's why he seldom sees much action on his side of the field. He's one of the few DBs who can isolate man-to-man on a receiver for an entire afternoon and not get burned.

THE KID WHO BEAT YOU TO THE HOOP PROBABLY BEAT YOU TO THIS SHOE.



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TOM DIPACE

Best HANDS

Jerry Rice, 49ers

Just when you think the guy is perfect, he goes and drops three balls last season. Of course, he caught 108, which happened to lead the league. We wanted to come up with some obscure name here, some guy who drives a GEO Metro but never drops the ball. But there's nobody out there to match Rice. According to Stats Inc., Pittsburgh's Charles Johnson led the league in drop percentage, catching 60 of the 61 balls he got his hands on. But then, he's hardly the focal point of the offense, as Rice is in San Francisco. In fact, Rice's 108 catches were more than twice as many as any of his teammates produced. Next was running back Terry Kirby with 52.

Best STADIUM FOOD

The Louisiana Superdome, New Orleans

In N'Awlins, some things never change. The Saints stink, but the food is great. They don't do boring burgers in the Superdome. You can snag seafood gumbo, jambalaya, crawfish étoufée or a blackened chicken sandwich at almost every concession stand. And you can wash it down with an Abita Turbo Dog, a dark beer brewed just north of the city, or an Abita Purple Haze, a raspberry-flavored brew particularly popular in yuppie circles. It's at the club level, though, where the major-league eats can be found. We're talking Louisiana crabcakes with mango chutney. They're not to die for, but they're well worth going to a Saints game for. Of course, they're not big on brats on the bayou. For those, you have to go to Lambeau, where sausage is an art form.

Best FEET

Barry Sanders, Lions

He's rushed for 11,725 yards in his first eight seasons. The question is, how many of those were ad-libbed? Sanders has an uncanny ability to run full speed in one direction, stop on a microchip (What, you thought we were going to say dime? This is the '90s, Bub) and head for the opposite side of the field. At 29, he needs 5,001 yards to tie Walter Payton's rushing record. Shouldn't be a problem. He needed 161 yards in last year's season finale against the 49ers to win the NFL rushing title. He went for 175 to surpass 1,500 yards for the third consecutive season, a feat unmatched in NFL history.

ALLEN KEE/BRSP

COURTESY OF PITTSBURGH STEELERS/MIKE FABIUS

Best OWNER

Dan Rooney, Steelers

At 65, Rooney is as unassuming as they come by NFL owner standards. He drives a Pontiac, lives in his father's house in a modest neighborhood near Three Rivers Stadium, and shows up at the office every morning. Sure, the Steelers are notorious for their frugality, but they take care of their players. To wit: Players fly first-class on team charters; coaches, sponsors and Rooney's family fly coach. Rooney was guaranteed a fat check for the Steelers' exhibition game in Ireland, but instead of pocketing the money, he paid for players and staff members to take their significant others overseas. And you wonder how the Steelers have been able to stay competitive despite such heavy losses on the free-agent front. ★

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- 2 Quarterbacks · 3 Running Backs · 4 Receivers
- 2 Kickers · 1 Defense/Special Team
- Each team must consist of 12 players to qualify.
- Only players on the official entry form are eligible for your initial roster. Additional players will be provided in your game kit for trading.
- 4 salary upgrades will occur throughout the season in which 5 players' values will be increased based on performance (1 QB, 1RB, 1 Rec, 1 PK, 1 Def/ST).

League Information
- All teams will be placed in 25-team leagues, and all leagues will be placed in 1 of 8 regions. League formation will occur after week 2.
- All entries (up to 25) that are received in the same envelope will be placed in the same league unless otherwise instructed.
- All teams compete for the overall national grand prize.
- Top 6 players from each league through week 8, will be invited to play in a supplemental Masters Level Challenge for additional cash prizes.

Reports
- Reports are available on a weekly or bi-monthly basis. All participants will be mailed bi-monthly reports, which are included in your entry fee.
- Reports are accessible via the Internet or by fax. Please call for details concerning fax services.

Entry Deadlines
- Entries accepted via the Internet (www.fantasysportshq.com) or by fax (972-868-1662) must be received no later than August 30, 1997.
- Entries received by mail must be postmarked by August 30, 1997 and received no later than September 5, 1997 to qualify.
- Late entries must be received by September 12, 1997 to qualify.
- Best 15 of 17 weekly scores count toward end of season total.

Prize Structure
- Prizes are awarded on League, Regional and National Levels. *1 in 25 will earn a 4 Day/3 Night Vacation to 1 of 20 resort location destinations. Weekly prizes awarded to the Top 20 national winners each week. Weeks 3 through end of season are eligible for Highest Single Week prize.*

1 OUT OF 3 WIN!

Salary Upgrades
- At each position, 1 player's salary will be upgraded $5 based on season-to-date average score divided by his salary.
- Player must be featured on active roster in weeks 5, 8, 11 & 14.

Cost to Play
- Entry fee for game play is $49.95
- 2 or more entries included in the same envelope all qualify for an entry fee of $39.95.
- International entries accepted. All fees must be paid in U.S. funds only. For Canadian, Mexican and overseas entries, please add $15 to cover additional mailing costs.

Cost to Trade
- Player trades are unlimited at $2.50 per trade.
- Players may only be traded for another within the same position.
- Trades may be conducted each week from Tuesday at 3:00 pm CST until Sunday at 10:00 am CST. Exceptions for Thur. & Sat. games.
- All Entries received by August 11, 1997 receive 5 FREE trades.
- All trades prior to August 31, 1997 are FREE.

EASY TO WIN PRIZES

End of Season Grand Prizes - GUARANTEED

1st:	$15,000	5th:	$750
2nd:	$5,000	6th-10th:	$500
3rd:	$2,000	11th-20th:	$150
4th:	$1,000	21st-50th:	$75

Highest Single Week
VIP Trip for 2 to Super Bowl XXXII in San Diego, CA

End of Season Regional Prizes
1st: $500 2nd: $250 3rd: $100

End of Season League Prizes
1st: 4 Day/3 Night Drive Away Vacation 2nd: $75 3rd: $50
Choose from San Francisco, Orlando, Hilton Head, Durango, Las Vegas or 15 other destination resort locations.
$20 discount on future games for Top 10 in each league.

Weekly Prizes
1st-10th: Great Merchandise 11th-20th: 3 Free Trades
Weekly Leader Board featured on Playoff Fantasy Football Weekly.

BONUS SCORING

PASSING	PTS.
Pass for TD 40+ yds	6
Pass for TD <40 yds	3
Every 50 yds	2
Pass for 2 pt conv	1

RUSH/RECEIVE	PTS.
Rush/receive TD 40+ yds	9
Rush/receive TD <40 yds	6
Every 25 yds	2
2 pt conv	2

KICKING	PTS.
Field Goal 40+ yds	6
Field Goal <40 yds	3
Extra Point	1

DEF/SPECIAL TEAMS	PTS.
Defense TD	6
Kick/Punt Return TD	6
Fum Rec/Int	2
Safety	2
Sack	1

· Only best 15 of 17 weekly scores will count toward end of season total.

WHY ENTER EARLY?
Entries received by 8/11/97 get
5 FREE TRADES ***(a $12.50 Value)***

- *Get your Game Kit by the beginning of the season –GUARANTEED!*
- *Game Kit includes list of complete NFL rosters, schedules and report guides for use with Interactive Commissioner.*
- *Access the Interactive Commissioner earlier for expert tips and player profiles.*
- *Get a jump on your competition.* All trades prior to August 31, 1997 are FREE!

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QUARTERBACKS (Draft 2)

- ❑ 100 Aikman, Troy (DAL) $39
- ❑ 101 Banks, Tony (STL) 38
- ❑ 102 Blake, Jeff (CIN) 50
- ❑ 103 Bledsoe, Drew (NE) 49
- ❑ 104 Bono, Steve (GB) 30
- ❑ 105 Brown, Dave (NYG) 31
- ❑ 106 Brunell, Mark (JAC) 55
- ❑ 107 Chandler, Chris (ATL) 33
- ❑ 108 Collins, Kerry (CAR) 32
- ❑ 109 Collins, Todd (BUF) 30
- ❑ 110 Detmer, Ty (PHI) 37
- ❑ 111 Dilfer, Trent (TB) 35
- ❑ 112 Druckenmiller, Jim (R) 25
- ❑ 113 Elway, John (DEN) 49
- ❑ 114 Erickson, Craig (MIA) 20
- ❑ 115 Esiason, Boomer (FrA) 30
- ❑ 116 Everett, Jim (NO) 33
- ❑ 117 Favre, Brett (GB) 59
- ❑ 118 Frerotte, Gus (WAS) 39
- ❑ 119 Friesz, John (SEA) 23
- ❑ 120 George, Jeff (OAK) 35
- ❑ 121 Graham, Kent (ARZ) 23
- ❑ 122 Grbac, Elvis (KC) 40
- ❑ 123 Harbaugh, Jim (IND) 36
- ❑ 124 Hebert, Bobby (ATL) 35
- ❑ 125 Hostetler, Jeff (OAK) 44
- ❑ 126 Humphries, Stan (SD) 37
- ❑ 127 Johnson, Brad (MIN) 40
- ❑ 128 Krieg, Dave (HOU) 32
- ❑ 129 Marino, Dan (MIA) 40
- ❑ 130 McNair, Steve (HOU) 40
- ❑ 131 Mirer, Rick (CHI) 22
- ❑ 132 Mitchell, Scott (DET) 45
- ❑ 133 Moon, Warren (SEA) 20
- ❑ 134 O'Donnell, Neil (NYJ) 40
- ❑ 135 Reich, Frank (DET) 30
- ❑ 136 Stewart, Kordell (PIT) 35
- ❑ 137 Testaverde, Vinnie (BAL) 55
- ❑ 138 Tomczak, Mike (PIT) 30
- ❑ 139 Young, Steve (SF) 40

RUNNING BACKS (Draft 3)

- ❑ 300 Abdul-Jabbar, K (MIA) $49
- ❑ 301 Allen, Marcus (KC) 42
- ❑ 302 Allen, Terry (WAS) 59
- ❑ 303 Alstott, Mike (TB) 33
- ❑ 304 Anders, Kimble (KC) 24
- ❑ 305 Anderson, Jamal (ATL) 47
- ❑ 306 Bates, Mario (NO) 22
- ❑ 307 Bennett, Edgar (GB) 31
- ❑ 308 Bettis, Jerome (PIT) 50
- ❑ 309 Biakabatuka, TIM (CAR) 35
- ❑ 310 Byner, Ernest (BAL) 30
- ❑ 311 Carter, Ki Jana (CIN) 35
- ❑ 312 Centers, Larry (ARZ) 44
- ❑ 313 Craver, Arron (DEN) 18
- ❑ 314 Davis, Terrell (DEN) 59
- ❑ 315 Dillon, Corey (R) 25
- ❑ 316 Dunn, Warrick (R) 25
- ❑ 317 Faulk, Marshall (IND) 36
- ❑ 318 Fenner, Derrek (OAK) 26
- ❑ 319 Fletcher, Terrell (SD) 21
- ❑ 320 George, Eddie (HOU) 50
- ❑ 321 Green, Harold (STL) 27
- ❑ 322 Hampton, Rodney (NYG) 23
- ❑ 323 Hanspard, Byron (R) 25
- ❑ 324 Harmon, Ronnie (HOU) 20
- ❑ 325 Harris, Ramont (CHI) 33
- ❑ 326 Hearst, Garrison (SF) 40
- ❑ 327 Hill, Greg (KC) 25
- ❑ 328 Hoard, Leroy (MIN) 20
- ❑ 329 Holmes, Derrek (BUF) 25
- ❑ 330 Johnson, Anthony (CAR) 42
- ❑ 331 Johnson, LeShawn (ARZ) 31
- ❑ 332 Kaufman, Napoleon (OAK)27
- ❑ 333 Kirby, Terry (SF) 32
- ❑ 334 Lee, Amp (MIN) 17
- ❑ 335 Levens, Dorsey (GB) 36
- ❑ 336 Loville, Derrick (SF) 25
- ❑ 337 Martin, Curtis (NE) 54
- ❑ 338 McElroy, Leland (ARZ) 20
- ❑ 339 Means, Natron (JAC) 18
- ❑ 340 Morris, Bam (BAL) 40
- ❑ 341 Murrell, Adrian (NYJ) 43
- ❑ 342 Neal, Lorenzo (NYJ) 18
- ❑ 343 Phillips, Lawrence (STL) 35
- ❑ 344 Rhett, Eric (TB) 40
- ❑ 345 Russell, Leonard (FrA) 33
- ❑ 346 Salaam, Rasham (CHI) 35
- ❑ 347 Sanders, Barry (DET) 53
- ❑ 348 Smith, Antowain (R) 25
- ❑ 349 Smith, Emmit (DAL) 52
- ❑ 350 Smith, Leonard (SEA) 31
- ❑ 351 Smith, Robert (MIN) 35
- ❑ 352 Stewart, James (JAC) 39
- ❑ 353 Thomas, Rodney (HOU) 22
- ❑ 354 Thomas, Thurman (BUF) 44
- ❑ 355 Vardell, Tommy (SF) 20
- ❑ 356 Warren, Chris (SEA) 38
- ❑ 357 Watters, Ricky (PHI) 55
- ❑ 358 Wheatley, Tyrone (NYG) 25
- ❑ 359 Zellars, Ray (NO) 19

RECEIVERS (Draft 4)

- ❑ 500 Alexander, Derrick (BAL)$44
- ❑ 501 Beebe, Don (GB) 25
- ❑ 502 Birden, J.J. (ATL) 25
- ❑ 503 Bjornson, Eric (DAL) 25
- ❑ 504 Brooks, Robert (GB) 40
- ❑ 505 Brown, Tim (OAK) 43
- ❑ 506 Bruce, Isaac (STL) 44
- ❑ 507 Calloway, Chris (NYG) 24
- ❑ 508 Carrier, Mark (CAR) 30
- ❑ 509 Carruth, Rae (R) 25
- ❑ 510 Carter, Chris (MIN) 45
- ❑ 511 Chmura, Mark (GB) 25
- ❑ 512 Chrebet, Will (NYJ) 27
- ❑ 513 Coates, Ben (NE) 35
- ❑ 514 Conway, Chris (CHI) 45
- ❑ 515 Early, Quinn (BUF) 31
- ❑ 516 Ellard, Henry (WAS) 27
- ❑ 517 Emanuel, Bert (ATL) 32
- ❑ 518 Freeman, Antonio (GB) 43
- ❑ 519 Fryar, Irving (PHI) 47
- ❑ 520 Galloway, Joey (SEA) 44
- ❑ 521 Glenn, Terry (NE) 38
- ❑ 522 Gonzalez, Tony (R) 25
- ❑ 523 Graham, Jeff (NYJ) 34
- ❑ 524 Green, Yatil (R) 25
- ❑ 525 Harrison, Marvin (IND) 34
- ❑ 526 Hastings, Andre (PIT) 30
- ❑ 527 Haynes, Michael (NO) 28
- ❑ 528 Hilliard, Ike (R) 25
- ❑ 529 Irvin, Michael (DAL) 40
- ❑ 530 Ismail, Raghib (CAR) 25
- ❑ 531 Jackson, Michael (BAL) 53
- ❑ 532 Jefferson, Shawn (NE) 25
- ❑ 533 Jett, James (OAK) 24
- ❑ 534 Johnson, Charles (PIT) 34
- ❑ 535 Johnson, Keyshawn (NYJ)34
- ❑ 536 Jones, Charlie (SD) 22
- ❑ 537 Jones, Chris T (PHI) 29
- ❑ 538 Kennison, Eddie (STL) 43
- ❑ 539 LaFleur, David (R) 25
- ❑ 540 Lewis, Thomas (NYG) 23
- ❑ 541 Martin, Tony (SD) 52
- ❑ 542 Mathis, Terrance (ATL) 30
- ❑ 543 McCaffery, Eddie (DEN) 25
- ❑ 544 McCardell, Keenan (JAC) 32
- ❑ 545 McDuffie, OJ (MIA) 36
- ❑ 546 Metcalf, Eric (ATL) 35
- ❑ 547 Miller, Anthony (DEN) 35
- ❑ 548 Moore, Herman (DET) 49
- ❑ 549 Moore, Rob (ARZ) 31
- ❑ 550 Morton, Johnny (DET) 31
- ❑ 551 Moulds, Eric (BUF) 25
- ❑ 552 Penn, Chris (KC) 24
- ❑ 553 Perriman, Brett (DET) 40
- ❑ 554 Pickens, Carl (CIN) 52
- ❑ 555 Reed, Andre (BUF) 41
- ❑ 556 Reed, Jake (MIN) 46
- ❑ 557 Rice, Jerry (SF) 47
- ❑ 558 Rison, Andre (FrA) 22
- ❑ 559 Sanders, Chris (HOU) 36
- ❑ 560 Sanders, Frank (ARZ) 26
- ❑ 561 Scott, Darney (CIN) 31
- ❑ 562 Sharpe, Shannon (DEN) 43
- ❑ 563 Smith, Jimmy (JAC) 44
- ❑ 564 Stokes, J.J. (SF) 25
- ❑ 565 Tasker, Steve (BUF) 25
- ❑ 566 Thigpen, Yancy (PIT) 30
- ❑ 567 Walls, Wessley (CAR) 34
- ❑ 568 Westbrook, Michael (WAS)40
- ❑ 569 Wycheck, Frank (HOU) 23

KICKERS (Draft 2)

- ❑ 700 Andersen, Morton (ATL) $31
- ❑ 701 Anderson, Gary (FrA) 37
- ❑ 702 Blanchard, Cary (IND) 43
- ❑ 703 Blanton, Scott (WAS) 38
- ❑ 704 Boniol, Chris (PHI) 38
- ❑ 705 Brien, Doug (NO) 26
- ❑ 706 Butler, Kevin (ARZ) 19
- ❑ 707 Carney, John (SD) 38
- ❑ 708 Christie, Steve (BUF) 33
- ❑ 709 Daluiso, Brad (NYG) 30
- ❑ 710 Del Greco, Al (HOU) 42
- ❑ 711 Elam, Jason (DEN) 35
- ❑ 712 Ford, Chris (OAK) 34
- ❑ 713 Hanson, Jason (DET) 23
- ❑ 714 Hollis, Micheal (JAC) 37
- ❑ 715 Husted, Michael (TB) 30
- ❑ 716 Jacke, Chris (GB) 36
- ❑ 717 Jaeger, Jeff (CHI) 25
- ❑ 718 Johnson, Norm (PIT) 34
- ❑ 719 Kasay, John (CAR) 46
- ❑ 720 Lohmiller, Chip (STL) 29
- ❑ 721 Lowery, Nick (FrA) 25
- ❑ 722 Nedney, Joe (MIA) 28
- ❑ 723 Pelfrey, Doug (CIN) 35
- ❑ 724 Peterson, Todd (SEA) 35
- ❑ 725 Sisson, Scott (MIN) 31
- ❑ 726 Stover, Matt (BAL) 29
- ❑ 727 Stoyanovich, Pete (KC) 27
- ❑ 728 Vinatieri, Adam (NE) 38
- ❑ 729 Wilkins, Jeff (STL) 41

DEFENSE/SPECIAL TEAMS (Draft1)

- ❑ 900 Arizona $27
- ❑ 901 Atlanta 25
- ❑ 902 Baltimore 24
- ❑ 903 Buffalo 34
- ❑ 904 Carolina 43
- ❑ 905 Chicago 30
- ❑ 906 Cincinnati 42
- ❑ 907 Dallas 32
- ❑ 908 Denver 32
- ❑ 909 Detroit 26
- ❑ 910 Green Bay 40
- ❑ 911 Houston 29
- ❑ 912 Indianapolis 31
- ❑ 913 Jacksonville 27
- ❑ 914 Kansas City 30
- ❑ 915 Miami 40
- ❑ 916 Minnesota 37
- ❑ 917 New England 39
- ❑ 918 New Orleans 24
- ❑ 919 NY Giants 40
- ❑ 920 NY Jets 30
- ❑ 921 Oakland 26
- ❑ 922 Philadelphia 41
- ❑ 923 Pittsburgh 42
- ❑ 924 San Diego 34
- ❑ 925 San Francisco 39
- ❑ 926 Seattle 36
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- ❑ 928 Tampa Bay 29
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AIKMAN

BACK ON TRACK

No more retirement worries, but for how long?

By Darryl Howerton

FED UP WITH THE COWBOYS, FED UP WITH FOOTBALL, TROY AIKMAN HAD scheduled a meeting with Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones to tell him so. ¶ Aikman, at age 30 and still at the peak of his career, was prepared last February to tell Jones of his plans to retire. ¶ Having endured a tumultuous 1995 season (you'll recall him saying during the Super Bowl postgame celebration that "relief" was his only emotion), Aikman suffered through another headache in '96. Only this time, there was no Super Bowl ring as compensation.

To Aikman, or at least in his February mind-set, a premature retirement was just something that had to be done, even if it meant prematurely retiring the Cowboys' dynasty hopes as well.

The long list of indictments and accusations of Cowboys players had become, well, a joke. Quipped David Letterman: "I read in the paper the other day where Rams rookie Lawrence Phillips was arrested a second time. Yep, now only two more arrests and he gets to join the Cowboys."

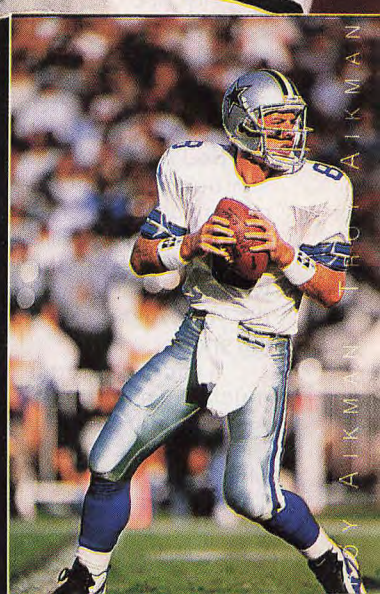
Guilty. Innocent. It didn't matter. The situations in which Aikman's teammates had put themselves placed their quarterback in a chaotic state of mind.

So when Aikman scheduled his meeting with Jones, the speculation in the hallways of the team's Valley Ranch facility was that the quarterback, unhappy with head coach Barry Switzer's lack of off-field control of his players, was prepared to issue a "he goes or I go" ultimatum. In turn, the owner, it was thought, would respond, "I'll do anything to make you happy here, Troy, short of getting rid of the coach," whom Jones loves like a brother. "Anything else, it's done."

The Gloom and Doom in Dallas Had Troy Aikman Wanting Out. Lucky for the Cowboys, He Called an Audible.

Despite his differences with Switzer, Aikman would never make the same mistake Magic Johnson made in 1983

TOM DIPACE (ACTION), DAN BRYANT (PORTRAIT)



A legend on the gridiron, Aikman is making a name for himself on the track as well with his celebrity-packed legends stock-car races at the Texas Motor Speedway.

TROY AIKMAN TROY AIKMAN TROY AIKMAN TROY AIKMAN TROY AIKMAN TROY AIKMAN

when he became the fall guy for L.A. Lakers head coach Paul Westhead's firing. ("The game is no longer fun for me," said a 23-year-old Magic.) Aikman, who holds his public image dear to him, would never go out like that. If his no-nonsense parents ever got wind of those fire-the-coach rumors, they'd throw a fit. Ken and Charlyn Aikman are not the kind of parents who idly sit by, condoning such actions from one of their children, America's quarterback or not.

There would be no ultimatum, only his two weeks' notice.

Was he serious? "Sure," says the quarterback on reflection of that potentially dreary day. "If I felt we were gonna go through the same season we went through last year, I wouldn't be playing now 'cause it wasn't fun.

"For me, it was not a matter of going out and playing just so I can say I played and collect a check. It's about going out and competing. It's about feeling good about the guys you're competing with, the way you're doing things, what you're trying to represent as an organization."

Jones said the right things in response to his superstar quarterback's complaints. For the first time, Jones made assurances that action would be taken to head off future problems. Aikman listened. Jones explained how the Cowboys would change. In detail. Aikman liked what he heard. It was the first time since the Jimmy Johnson era that Aikman had heard anything resembling talk of discipline, which Troy was taught early on by his family.

"I walked away feeling very good," Aikman says. "Now it was a matter of how we were going to handle problems in the coming year."

Fast-forward to the present. Troy Aikman is tinkering with his race car at the Texas Motor Speedway, preparing for his celebrity-filled legends stock car race that would precede the Dallas Indy Racing League event (after which, you might recall, an angry A.J. Foyt backhanded Arie Luyendyck). Aikman is surrounded by some of his closest current and former teammates, guys like Jay Novacek, Bill Bates, Herschel Walker. Far from the weary warrior who set foot in Jones' office earlier in the year, Aikman is happy. He's talking sports.

"A racing team is put together much like a football team," explains Aikman, who caught the racing bug at the 1993 Daytona 500 when Sterling Marlin, the eventual winner, invited Troy to be a part of his pit crew. "You have your owner of a car like you would in football. You have the coach, the guy who's giving instructions to the driver—the driver being the quarterback. Then there's the team, a real supporting cast, which is the pit crew."

"If I felt we were gonna go through the same season we went through last year, I wouldn't be playing now 'cause it wasn't fun."

In 1996, Aikman set out to win a fourth Super Bowl, only to be deterred by an unfocused pit crew that spent far too much time partying with a condoning owner and coach. Since Jimmy Johnson left the pit crew in '94, the Cowboys have clearly gotten off track.

But Aikman's threats of calling it quits rang loud and clear with Jones: No Aikman, no Cowboys. Something had to be done.

Check that, some *things* had to be done. In that summitt, Aikman learned: Calvin Hill would be hired as the team's consultant (Jones' call); a tight end—David LaFleur ended up the choice—would be drafted in the first round (Jones and Switzer's call with Aikman's vote of confidence);

Aikman, 30, has a new outlook on how he handles on- and off-field decisions. "I'm not the same guy I was when I was 22, playing in my first game," he says. "I've gotten more and more involved in my own businesses, like the auto mall [right]. It's nothing I should be commended for, that's just part of life."

PHOTOS BY DAN BRYANT

TOM DIPACE

Daryl Johnston had to be re-signed (everyone's call); the media would be herded off from their all-access privileges at Valley Ranch (Aikman's call nine years running); Switzer had to stay (Aikman now: "We have differences of opinion on how to run things, but it's a healthy situation. We're both in it to win. I think we have a good relationship").

All of that was well and good, but it wasn't until Jones addressed the D-word that Aikman's eyes lit up. Aikman was assured that discipline would be stressed. If Jones and Switzer weren't going to bring out the paddle, Aikman was—and the owner and coach had better support the quarterback when he spoke.

"We'll have crises during the season this year," acknowledges Aikman. "Maybe not of the size or the magnitude we had last year, but each season, something happens that kind of jolts everybody. It's how we choose to deal with it that's gonna determine the team's success or lack thereof. Last year, we didn't deal with it very well."

Aikman has been handed the reins without interference from Playmaker's antics, Leon's Lett-downs or other misbehaving teammates, some of whom would argue that Aikman always has been the leader. But the past two seasons, Aikman was involved in various tug-of-wars of wills.

"Discipline was given a negative connotation," says Aikman. "The teams that have been successful over the years are the teams that have been the least penalized, teams that don't turn the ball over, teams that execute. You need discipline to do all that." Now, with history bearing out that his way was the right way, Aikman is the undisputed champion on a team of champions.

"Troy Aikman is 'the man' around here," says Smith. "Aikman is the vice president of the Dallas Cowboys. He's the decision-maker. The mover around here. It's always been that way. Troy says, 'We run the ball too much,' they say, 'Well, we'll throw the ball a lil' more.' That's just the way it is." Smith then breaks off into his best Bruce Hornsby imitation, singing, "That's just the waaay iiit izzzz."

The game is one we all learned as children. It's called Follow the Leader. "Everybody has always looked to Troy for a little bit of that," says Dale Hellestrae, Cowboys long snapper and longtime friend of Aikman's. "Obviously, Troy led this team, and when this team has followed, we've done real well. When the team didn't, we didn't do well."

Deion Sanders was the object of criticism one day in the locker room—about how he shouldn't be playing baseball for the Cincinnati Reds while he's being paid $30 million to be a Cowboy. Aikman quelled that potentially friction-causing line of thinking: "We knew the deal when we got Deion that he was playing baseball too. He chose not to play last year, that's all. Now he's playing."

Haven't heard a peep since.

A disgruntled Irvin failed to show up for quarterback school. No one said a word. Irvin was untouchable, unreachable. Rumors ran rampant that he was retiring or demanding to be traded. Aikman spoke up the first day of camp. Irvin needed to get his butt in there, Aikman said, and the echoes chorused through the locker room at Valley Ranch. Switzer and Jones, walking on eggshells, backed their quarterback as they said they would. Surprisingly enough, Irvin was unearthed, gave his own news conference 48 hours later, addressed concerns of Aikman's and relayed his love via the press.

"I just felt that something needed to be said and no one else was willing to say it," explains Aikman. "I've always been that way."

Much has been written about how the quarterback has become more vocally assertive, more of a leader. In doing research for this story alone, we came across the "Troy is more vocally assertive this year" articles in nearly every periodical each season: 1991, 1992, 1993 .... The years may change, but the media perception remains the same: "Troy is finally speaking up."

"They do the same thing every year," says teammate Emmitt Smith, who disputes the notion that Aikman has changed.

This year's Cowboys, if camps are an indicator, will follow a more disciplined approach. Aikman says it's about time. As one of only 12 Cowboys in his 30s, the veteran QB needs to know as much from his troops before he gears his battered body for war.

"I think 30 will stagger you a little bit," says Aikman. "For a couple days, it kind of makes you evaluate things, then you move on with everything. When you're 30, looking back going into my ninth season, it kind of makes you realize, No. 1, how quickly things go. It seems like just yesterday I was getting drafted by the Cowboys. The other thing it makes me realize is that in the grand scheme of things, football is pretty irrelevant. Even though it's important to me, I try to remember that it's not life and death."

As for Aikman's charitable and

MITCHELL B. REIBEL/SPORTS PHOTO MASTERS

"Troy Aikman is 'the man' around here .... It's always been that way, been that way since I got here. Troy says, 'We run the ball too much,' they say, 'Well, we'll throw the ball a lil' more.' That's just the way it is."

—Emmitt Smith

business functions? "It's been fun, getting involved in that side of life," he says of his auto mall and hospital project ventures. "Nobody wants to get old, but I've actually enjoyed the maturation process. I know what's important to me now, I know what I want. I know what brings happiness to me, so I don't waste a lot of time doing things I don't want to do."

The Dallas quarterback reflects on a recent addition to his family—a trained black Labrador retriever has resided at the Aikman manor since June.

Jones explained how the Cowboys would change. In detail. Aikman liked what he heard. It was the first time since the Jimmy Johnson era that Aikman had heard anything resembling talk of discipline.

Aikman, who is single, has wanted his own dog for years but had never gotten one because he traveled so much. The solution? Get a trained dog who could spend time away from her master at Aikman Enterprises, in the very office where his mother organizes Troy's business ventures.

"She's well-behaved," Aikman says, which should come as no surprise to anyone. Can't have an Aikman dog urinating on the carpet. The name's Simba, like the cub from the Disney movie *The Lion King*.

One can almost hear Troy in his best James Earl Jones imitation talking to Simba, like father lion Mustafa did in the movie. "One day, my son, all the land you see will be yours. But you must never, ever go into the dark side."

Troy Aikman has been to the dark side. He has no plans to return. ★

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–Karen Thelin, *Sociologist*

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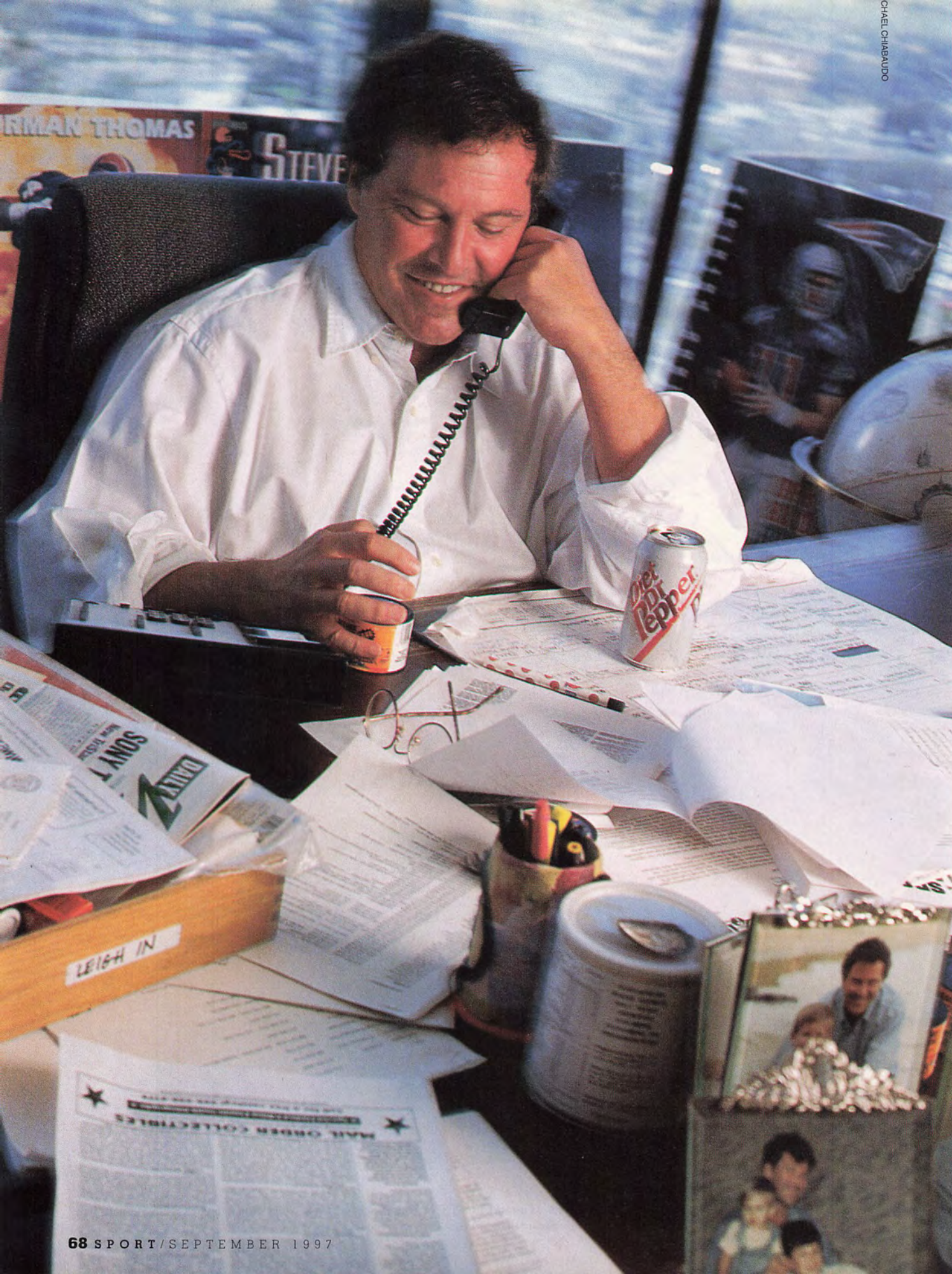


MICHAEL CHIABAUDO

COURTESY OF COLUMBIA/TRI-STAR

Show Leigh the Money

Agent Leigh Steinberg Has a Multimillion-Dollar Clientele, but That's Not What Makes the NFL's Real-Life Jerry Maguire Rich

MICHAEL CHIABAUDO

By Darryl Howerton

LEIGH STEINBERG IS OUT OF his element, yet in an odd way, right in his element. The setting is Club Ecstasy, a New York night spot a block away from the city's renowned Millennium Hotel, and the man causing the biggest scene among the crowd of partygoers tonight is the 5-10 attorney who's more than twice the age of the majority of them.

It's a place Steinberg would never frequent by himself: On the club's third level, college-aged kids are making out; on level two is a pack of teen-age girls looking to score a drug by the club's name, perhaps thinking this would be the place to find it; on the ground floor, go-go dancers and a free-spirited crowd dance to the boom-bass-tic beat of house music. This is not a scene for the faint of heart.

Yet on this night, only hours before the 1997 NFL draft, the 48-year-old superagent from the law firm of Steinberg & Moorad has convinced football analyst and fellow 40-something Fred Edelstein and another friend to venture into this otherworld to "hang out with my guys." The objects of curious glances from the black T-shirted bouncers outside the club, Steinberg and his aging posse meet up with his new posse on the dance floor. There—surrounded by a pair of 21-year-old, 6-5 football hulksters named Tony Gonzalez and Darrell Russell, along with their girlfriends, friends and relatives—Steinberg takes the floor, dancing solo in a circle John Travolta-style, oblivious to the fact that the Travolta-style doesn't exactly fit in with the techno sound pulsating throughout the club. Steinberg's moves? Sort of a cross between Steve Martin's King Tut strut and a synchronized swimmer. Whatever he's doing, it's caught the attention of Russell's dumbfounded best friend, 6-11 UCLA center Jelani McCoy, who asks, "Just what is Leigh doing?"

Who knows? Who cares? Steinberg's having fun.

LESS THAN 12 HOURS LATER, STEINBERG IS AGAIN CENTER STAGE, only in this setting no one is questioning his moves. He's working the cell phones, rapping with people more his age—NFL general managers, coaches and the like. Steinberg is in the backseat of a New York cab en route to Madison Square Garden,

MICHAEL CHIABAUDO

site of the draft. The superagent is juggling calls among members of the Rams, Lions and Seahawks front offices, making a last-ditch effort to convince someone to trade up to take Russell with the No. 1 pick. "Jobie," Steinberg says to his assistant seated to his left, "your phone is now my phone." The frazzled Steinberg has misplaced his cellular and doesn't have time to look for it, even if it is in his coat pocket, as Jobie would later point out.

No matter. Steinberg needs to fight for His Guy Russell immediately, so he grabs Jobie's phone. Fight for His Guy. That's why he's good. That's why players love him. In two months' time, Steinberg has helped Russell's stock rise from around the No. 6 pick to No. 2, and it would've been No. 1 if that blasted Bill Parcells hadn't traded the Jets' pick to the Rams for practically nothing. "The No. 6 pick, a third- and a fourth-rounder is as little as anyone has gotten for a No. 1 overall pick in the history of the draft," was the consensus reached by Steinberg, Edelstein and beat writers who were reliving the past two decades' worth of drafts over drinks the previous night.

As the cab is stopped at a red light, Steinberg notices the hundreds of painted-green Jets fans lined up outside the draft premises and says, "Look at those nuts."

Steinberg's temporary hostility toward New Yorkers is clearly the result of The Trade. Steinberg got word of it two days before the draft as he was checking messages at his office from his first-class seat on his flight from Los Angeles to New York. Parcells, whose Jets owned the first pick of the draft, appeared set on choosing Russell. But following The Trade, which gave the top spot to St. Louis, the Rams were making it clear that Orlando Pace was their guy.

Consequently, Steinberg spends 210 minutes on a 240-minute flight on the phone, gathering info, pitching Russell to the Rams and trying to convince other teams to make a deal with them. At the moment, Steinberg is on the phone with St. Louis, which in less than an hour will announce its selection. "Call Detroit a minute before your pick," he tells the Rams. "I'm telling you, they'll give you the world."

Steinberg knows he's fighting a lost cause. Teams lucky enough to have the No. 1 pick aren't apt to just trade it away minutes before the draft. So once inside the draft-headquarters green room, Steinberg lets Russell, friends and family know the latest: "Detroit is trying to trade up to No. 1 to take Darrell, but I don't think it'll happen. There's a 90-percent chance the Rams will take Pace with the 1, which means Oakland will use its pick to take Darrell."

He asks Russell if he wants to play for Oakland—just as he inquired about the Jets, Rams, Lions, etc. Russell nods his approval. Steinberg proceeds to tell Russell everything about Oakland, from how many clients he has there (Desmond Howard, Jeff George, Russell Maryland, David Klingler) to how great the defensive line will be ("like a Fearsome Foursome—they'll have you, Russell Maryland, Chester McGlockton and Lance Johnstone") to the names of the Bay Area newspapers and its beat writers who will interview him within the half-hour the pick is announced. Not an ounce of detail is missed.

JUST A TYPICAL DAY AT THE OFFICE AND WHY film director Cameron Crowe (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *Say Anything*) chose Steinberg as his model for Jerry Maguire. Steinberg lives a movie every day (Fast Times at Steinberg & Moorad? Say Everything?). The NFL's No. 1 attorney may not have the appearance of the prototypical slick agent—he chews tobacco, dresses down and his hair becomes more harried as the day progresses. Still, you can't help but see the real-life Jerry Maguire at work.

"There's nothing some people would like better than to see my relationship with Leigh fail. There's a lot of cynicism out there, so when some people hear about all the charitable functions Leigh is involved in, they tend to think it's for good press or for a tax write-off."

—San Francisco 49ers quarterback Steve Young

Crowe wanted to view it firsthand, so he followed around the superagent for three years—going to NFL owners meetings, drafts and games and sitting in on negotiations. Tom Cruise, who played Jerry Maguire in the movie, also spent time with Steinberg (who, incidentally, looks a lot more like Tom Berenger than Cruise) to get his part down. Even Cuba Gooding Jr., the Academy-Award-winning actor from the movie, got into the act. "We passed him off as one of my clients, a wide receiver from a small school, just so he could get into character," Steinberg says. Steinberg remembers telling Gooding about how "meaty" the role was and that it had Oscar potential. "Cuba thought I was exaggerating. So next time I see him, on Oscar night, he walks into this party, spots me and yells, 'Leeeeeigh, show meee the moneeeyyy! Runs over and gives me a big hug. It was great."

The Oscar-nominated *Jerry Maguire*, whose title character was patterned after

The A-List

The following are some of the more impressive names among Steinberg & Moorad's 110 active big-league clients:

Football
Troy Aikman
Gary Anderson
Drew Bledsoe
Larry Centers
Ray Childress
Kerry Collins
Eric Davis
Kevin Greene
Merton Hanks
Jim Harbaugh
Desmond Howard
Daryl Johnston
Brent Jones
Carnell Lake
Russell Maryland
Tim McDonald
Warren Moon
Neil O'Donnell
Jesse Sapolu
Bruce Smith
Derrick Thomas
Thurman Thomas
William Thomas
Steve Wallace
Darren Woodson
Steve Young

Baseball
Will Clark
Raul Mondesi
Gregg Olson
Ivan Rodriguez
Matt Williams

Basketball
John Starks

Boxing
Oscar De La Hoya
Evander Holyfield

Gymnastics
Kerri Strug

Steinberg, shows that agents can be human, contrary to popular belief. Much of the movie's material was taken from Steinberg's life. Steinberg got his start in 1975 when he hooked up with his first client, Steve Bartkowski, a college friend at Cal-Berkeley whom the Atlanta Falcons selected with the first pick in the NFL draft 22 years ago.

The problems Jerry Maguire had with his newly wed wife were similar to those Steinberg encountered with his. "I remember trying to get four of the first 12 picks signed from the '85 draft right after marrying Lucy," he says. "I was on the road forever and calling her from Green Bay. I told her I was making progress with Forrest Gregg and that I'd be home soon. She just yelled, 'Well, marry Forrest Gregg then!' She was not happy."

Another parallel between Steinberg and Jerry Maguire: Maguire was counseled by his client, wide receiver Rod Tidwell. "That was me and Warren Moon," says Steinberg of the quarterback who's been with him since 1978. "I often sought Warren out for romantic advice."

The friendship between Maguire and his star athlete was based on Steinberg's relationship with his players. "When Cameron saw how Drew Bledsoe and Tim McDonald interacted with me, joking, teasing, that helped him create the relationship between Maguire and Tidwell in the movie. When Cameron met Tim, in fact, at the '93 owners meetings in Palm Desert, Tim was a free agent at the time. So Cameron asked him what he was doing there. Tim just said, 'Leigh just told me to come and he'd show me the money. So the movie's catchphrase actually came from Tim McDonald."

MICHAEL CHIABAUDO

FOR DECADES, STEINBERG AND HIS clients have received good press because of their well-publicized charitable endeavors. Spend time with the Southern California-based sports attorney and he's sure to remind you of Troy Aikman's this or Steve Young's that. Cynics roll their eyes at this "goodness" perception, but what they don't seem to realize is that there are athletes out there who want to make a difference, and by aligning themselves with Steinberg, they know he has the track record to get it done.

"There's nothing some people would like better than to see my relationship with Leigh fail," says Young. "There's a lot of cynicism out there in the world, so when some people hear about all the charitable functions Leigh is involved in, they tend to think it's for good press or for a tax write-off. Those people just don't know Leigh."

When Steinberg was a youth, his family would have weekly discussions over—get this—human relations. Leigh won't share the story, but his father, Warren, recalls the time when his family of five would gather around the table to discuss what each had done for the good of humanity that week. Warren, a high school principal in Los Angeles, would conduct the meeting along with his wife Betty, a librarian. And these kids—8-year-old Leigh, 6-year-old James (currently involved in a religious sect in northern California) and 4-year-old Donald (now a U.S. ambassador to Angola)—would discuss how they tried to make things better at their schools. Each family member at each meeting would pay dues, a penny for every year of age (so an 8-year-old Leigh had to pay eight cents at each meeting), and at the end of the year, the group would vote on how the money would be donated. "But because we did this as a group, and there were three kids to only two adults, sometimes they'd outvote us and we'd go to Disneyland," Warren says.

Forty years later, Leigh, like Jerry Maguire, seems more interested in making a difference than in making a buck. "To this day," says Leigh, who now has his own family of five, "if I walked home and told my dad I'd negotiated a $10 million contract, he'd just say, 'Gee, that's great.' But if I told him I had set up a community program that helped kids, he'd throw his arms around me and really get excited. It was just different in our home. Because of that, I had to make a difference somehow. If I couldn't do it in the sports world, I would've gotten out of sports and gone into politics or been an environmental lawyer or some rights lawyer."

Save the whales. Save the dolphins. Save the endangered species of the role-model athlete. All noble causes indeed. ★

MICKEY PFLEGER

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Steinberg has always shined in the public spotlight, whether (above) negotiating Steve Young's famous USFL contract, introducing Super Bowl MVP Desmond Howard as a new Raider, or (right) hobnobbing at a *Jerry Maguire* premiere with stars from the world of football (Warren Moon), gymnastics (Kerri Strug) and Hollywood (Cuba Gooding Jr.)

Hotshot

Billy Wagner

Some dedicated people spend their entire lives training to become professional athletes. Some gifted athletes spend their lives humbly tripping over themselves only to become professional athletes anyway.

Growing up in Virginia, Billy Wagner never really thought seriously about a career in the majors. His first love was football, and he played all the time...until the day the right-hander broke his right arm. Wagner suffered tremendously during those 45 days the cast prevented him from playing sports. The day it was removed, he rushed out to pick up where he left off, only to break the same arm again.

Most would take this as a sign that perhaps they weren't meant to play a certain sport. Not Wagner. "I just developed my left arm and went from there. I didn't really think it was anything special. I didn't have a choice."

OK, fine. There are a lot of positions you can play in football where it really doesn't matter if you're coordinated in one arm or the other. But a baseball pitcher? In the majors? Impossible! And after the way he approached baseball—"I never even thought about pitching very much in college, I just went out there and threw it as hard as I could"—there's no way he should be blowing 95 mph fastballs past the best hitters in the National League.

But he is. In 37 games for the Houston Astros in 1996, the 5-11, 180-pounder struck out 67 batters while yielding just 28 hits in 52 innings. This season, as the Astros' closer, the 26-year-old has picked up where he left off.

Baseball save men are supposed to be intimidators. Towering above the mound, they'll snarl and stare down a hitter. Wagner is the antithesis of the Lee Smith-Troy Percival prototype. He looks like some kid who just won a promotional giveaway to throw a pitch to Barry Bonds or Mike Piazza. Instead, Billy The Kid blows them away.

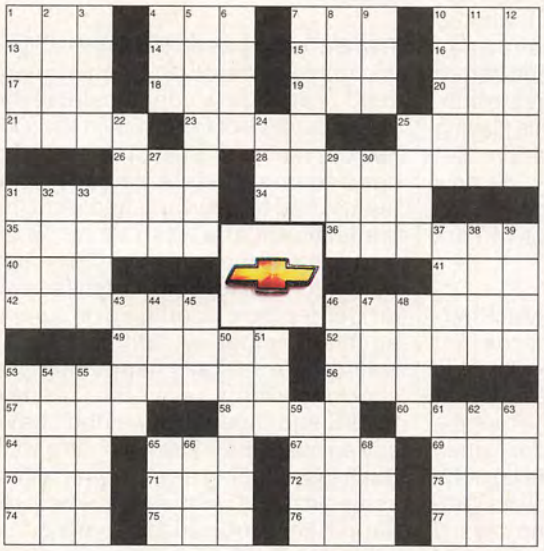
"It just seems like he was born to be a closer," says Astros manager Larry Dierker. "He's got the temperament and the pitches, if not the size, to be a great closer."

—Greg Guss

RON VESELY

The Chevrolet Truck SPORTword Puzzle

By Stanley Newman



Across

1. Dog's warning
4. Recipe amount: abbr.
7. Cooperstown institution: abbr.
10. Public prosecutors: abbr.
13. '70s Dodgers pitcher Doug
14. Rice University athlete
15. Bachelor's last words: 2 wds.
16. Ostrich relative
17. Emulate Alex Karras
18. Actress Farrow
19. Baseball broadcaster Barney
20. Lajoie's nickname
21. Marvin Miller's successor
23. 1964 Summer Olympics star
25. Masters champ in '87
26. Fenway nickname
28. Hard-hit baseball
31. Concern of a golfer or batter
34. "THE MOST DEPENDABLE, LONGEST-LASTING TRUCKS"
35. Tenure in sports
36. Plan out, as a golf course
40. Pitching ability
41. Hockey-shutout box score
42. See 53 Across
46. Swimming strokes
49. NBA scoring leader in '95
52. Hurt one's leg in a slide, perhaps
53. With 42 Across, Giants' No. 1 draft pick in '81
56. Be left on base
57. Contemporary of Jimmy and Bjorn
58. Ineffective, as a free thrower
60. Track & Field Hall of Famer Kiviat
64. Family members
65. Harold Traynor's nickname
67. Be on the disabled list
69. Coach Parseghian
70. Heart chart: abbr.
71. Played a ground game
72. Tennis-match division
73. Top of a tennis-ball can
74. __ Moines, Iowa
75. The Senators' province: abbr.
76. Emmitt Smith stats: abbr.
77. Final-game winner in the '96 World Series

Down

1. '96 Wimbledon winner
2. Compete in the 440
3. Baseball role for John Goodman
4. Harmon or Heinsohn
5. Winning coach in the '96 Super Bowl
6. Flea flicker, for one
7. Halfback nicknamed "Crazylegs"
8. Kind of poem
9. Baseball Thursday network
10. Rodeo rider's pants material
11. Emulate the '69 Mets
12. __ heavyweight (boxing division)
22. First name of the '84 NL MVP
24. Frank Gifford's alma mater
25. NL triples leader in '55
27. Hole-in-one
29. The Big __ Machine
30. New Year's __ (Alamo Bowl day)
31. "Shoo!"
32. Figure skater Lipinski
33. Palmer's gallery
37. "Field of Dreams" setting
38. Bull's-eye color
39. Horse-race margin, at times
43. Hot Stove League tales
44. Pee Wee Reese's uniform number
45. Stimpy's pal
46. Carried Kite's bag
47. Driving-home stat
48. Vicinity
50. Jackie Stewart speaks with one
51. First name of "The Lip"
53. Favored, as a horse
54. Tennis great Marble
55. Hockey positions
59. In the basement
61. Illegal motion on the mound
62. Lake near Jacobs Field
63. __ Byng Trophy
65. What Woods turned in '96
66. Charleson of "Chariots of Fire"
68. Some defensive linemen: abbr.

See page 83 for Chevrolet Truck SPORTword Puzzle answers.

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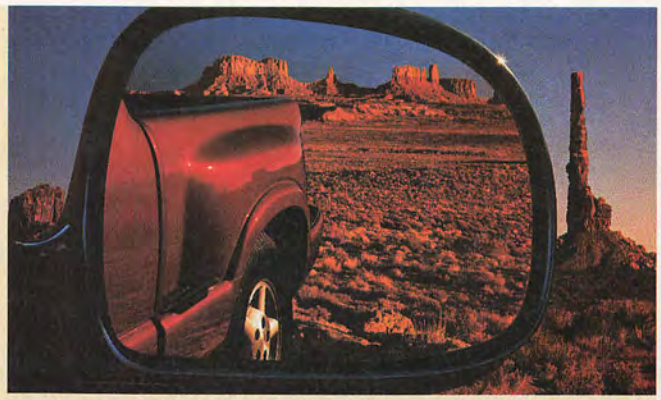

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GOLFING TRENDS

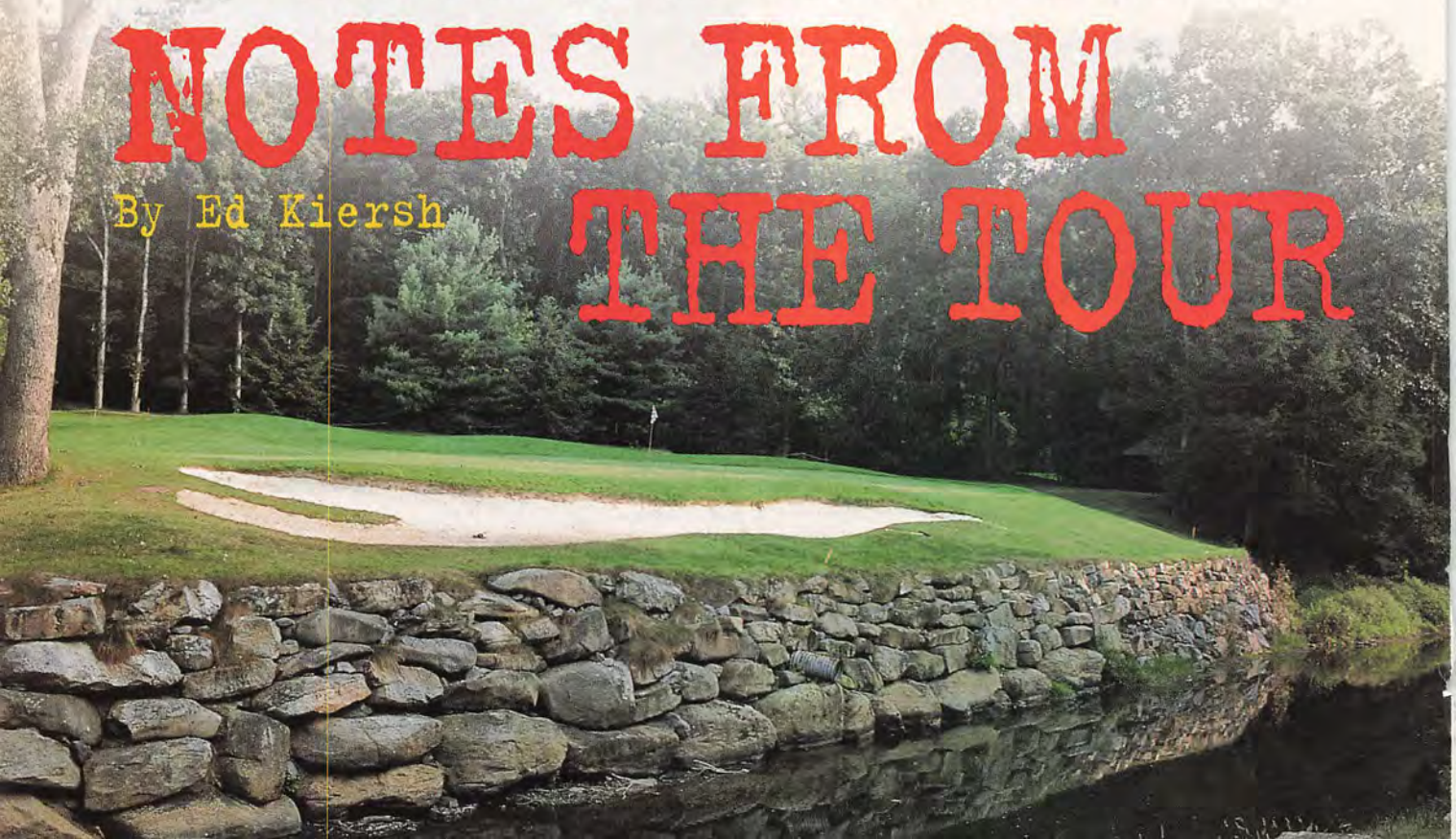
The Shark and the Fat Lady—With the help of Greg Norman's toothy smiles, Cobra Golf has taken a big bite out of the club market. But when it came to putters, not even the charismatic Shark had been able to catapult Cobra's sales past such industry leaders as Odyssey, Ping, Titleist, Ram and Ray Cook. Now, though, Cobra is hoping to energize its putter business with a potential buyout of the Bobby Grace Golf Design company, which manufactures the Fat Lady Swings mallet putter popularized by Nick Price. The two companies have held serious talks, and while Cobra initially denied reports that a takeover was imminent, one industry source says: "Cobra's interest in Bobby Grace has been a longtime love affair. Look for this romance to be consummated."

Snubbing the Prez—It's not known when Tiger Woods will have his own candy bar, or a show on MTV, but one thing is already certain: He's a full-blown phenomenon, as big as Michael Jordan, the Beatles and Bruce Springsteen. How big is big? In front of 200 media members, many from as far away as Japan and China, Woods explained why he turned down an invitation by President Clinton to appear at a Shea Stadium celebration of the anniversary of Jackie Robinson's integrating baseball: "I had planned my vacation. It was set. And, two, why didn't Mr. Clinton invite me before the Masters? That didn't happen. If he wanted me there, I think it would have been best if he would have asked me before the Masters." Rebuking the prez in public this way might not lead to his playing golf with Clinton any time soon. Yet Woods hardly needs to worry. His new playmates include Oprah Winfrey, Kevin Costner, the Dutchess of York ("Fergie") and Jordan.

Cigar Chic—Call it the Elle MacPherson Syndrome. PGA Tour pros just want to do it after seeing Elle with a big stogie in her mouth on the cover of *Smoke* magazine. And so the game's hottest hitters are clamoring for Cuban Cohibas—guys such as Davis Love III, Justin Leonard, Brad Faxon, Tom Watson and Jesper Parnevik, who says: "I really like to smoke a cigar when I win. I keep a lot of cigars in my bag, and they're also great for a relaxing evening at the card table." Cigars and golf have become such a natural pairing, the Cigar Smoking Golfers Association (800-597-CSGA) is organizing a Ryder Cup smokers event next year in Scotland that will pit American cigar-loving golfers against their European counterparts.

The Bulldog Loses His Bite—Tiger Woods is certainly the golf story of 1997. Yet equally spectacular is the disappearance of Corey Pavin. By mid-'97, this recent U.S.Open winner, who has become a fixture on Ryder Cup teams, had totally vanished from the leaderboard and wasn't even to be found among the tour's top 100 money winners. As Mike Biggs, a spokesman for Cornerstone Sports, Pavin's management company, admits: "We all want to know what's happening. It's shocking. Corey says it isn't his new PRGR equipment. So we don't have any answers. He's just not putting well. But he is plugging away, trying to find some answers. And we know he'll rebound. He's focusing on making this year's Ryder Cup, and if he wins a few times, he could still make the team on points." But that's still a mighty big if.

BRIAN TIRPAK



NOTES FROM THE TOUR

By Ed Kiersh

MIKE KLEMME/GOLFOTO

GOLF DESTINATION

LA COSTA RESORT AND SPA

Relive the magic. Stand on the tee of the South Course's 16th hole, and look out over the 189 yards of pure watery terror.

There, at the La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, Calif., the annual site of the Mercedes Championship, Tiger Woods won a sudden death playoff against Tom Lehman by calmly knocking a short iron dead on the pin.

Average golfers might not be able to duplicate that feat, yet La Costa's lush 36 holes—demanding Tiger's distance, precise shot-making and crafty course management—is still a world-class treat.

Just be prepared for trouble, especially when the winds off the nearby Pacific Ocean kick up, and keep driving distances down on the soft, tight fairways of the 6,524-yard South Course. The thick rough is merciless, so the premium is on mid- to long-iron play. Yet even the straightest of shooters will be intimidated by the four finishing holes, which Lee Trevino has dubbed "the longest mile in golf."

Though longer at 6,987 yards, the far more open North Course, which winds through canyons and foothills, is tailored for resort golfers wanting an easier test. But don't be fooled by those forgiving fairways. Many of the holes are uphill and lined with devilish bunkers, and the slick, undulating greens are treacherous.

After finishing 36, forget golf's back-breaking travails and savor the resort's internationally reputed spa. Whether it's enjoying aromatherapy, a massage or a Roman pool, this retreat only promises pampering and indulgence.

—Ed Kiersh

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GOLFING TRENDS

Greg Norman

Still a Tiger Himself/By Ed Kiersh

Before the "Michael Jordan in pants" era began with Tiger Woods and his 325-yard tee shots, it was all Great White Shark.

Greg Norman and his Crocodile Dundee swagger and 79 tournament wins was "the man," the heir apparent to Jack Nicklaus' throne. More than just golf's most dominant player during the last decade, he was the game's Great Gatsby, that larger-than-life and always Hollywood-stylish tycoon who profited from numerous businesses (apparel, boats, course design), was reportedly worth more than $100 million, and jetted around the globe with his golf buddy, President Clinton.

Even after his notorious collapse at the 1996 Masters, called by some the "greatest choke in golf history," Norman still stirred the public's imagination. Rather than duck annoying questions, he showed true grit by standing tall in front of his critics and firing back (albeit rather defensively): "Look, I'm not going to dodge anything. What happened there that day, it happened. That's the way life is. I just screwed up. There was a minor flaw in my game and it showed through the more I tried to push it. If you people [the media] want to keep talking about it, it won't affect me. I want to get back there."

This was gripping "wait 'til next year" stuff—a soul-searching cry befitting the man who, while winning two majors in 21 years, carries the burden of losing five majors on the final hole.

Maybe at age 42, after consulting a motivational guru and working with new swing teacher David Leadbetter, Norman will finally deliver on his long-standing promise to reign supreme—and to "kick butt" as he said he would after his Masters debacle. But just as his past has been checkered with disappointments, Norman's future is also hazy now that wunderkind Tiger Woods has burst onto the scene. Can the suddenly eclipsed Norman adjust to Woods' top-draw coronation and successfully compete against The Kid's younger nerves and bigger stick?

"I've never run away from anything, and my passion to play is always there," says Norman, who earned nearly $1 million last year. "I've got enough attention. I still have my fans, and Tiger has his fans, and Jack [Nicklaus] has his, and Freddie [Couples] has his. I feel sorry for Tiger in a lot of ways. I think he doesn't have a life for a 21-year-old. I don't have any resentment toward what he's been earning. I think that's great. I just think it will be very interesting to see the progress."

Irritated that Woods invited himself to the Shark Shootout last September (the two didn't speak for months), Norman would undoubtedly like to steal some of the phenom's thunder with a win or two. Yet calling himself "a reluctant celebrity," though his monthly endorsement revenues total more than $1 million, Norman at least sounds as if he has no grand designs about his legacy, insisting: "Trophies aren't everything. I'd love to win all the tournaments I've ever played, but if I don't, I still know I've been the best I can possibly be. I'm happy. I can't wait for the day just to be a regular old Joe."

Piloting his own helicopter or Gulfstream IV jet to tournaments from an eight-acre estate outside Palm Beach, Fla., making more than $38 million from his Cobra golf investment and cavorting with President Clinton might not square with this "regular old Joe" refrain.

But at least say one thing about Norman: Unlike the many dour-faced golfers on TV, the Shark has brought panache to the game.

ANDY REDDINGTON/ALLSPORT

GOLFING TRENDS

CRAIG JONES/ALLSPORT

The Grip and Stance/By Sandy Lyle

TIP OF THE MONTH

To play good golf, amateurs have to get their ABCs right, and that means taking a proper stance and having the right grip.

Too many golfers have their left hand turned too much over to the right. They show four knuckles, or have a very strong left hand, which makes it impossible for the right to go on the grip and invariably leads to big trouble. When players have such a strong left, golf becomes a muscle game in which aggression replaces a good swing. The clubface becomes closed on the backswing, and balls will generally go very low.

Instead, make believe you're clapping hands, with each palm facing the other, then lower your right hand. Hold the grip of the club in the bottom of your fingers, showing one or at most two knuckles, and make sure the palms are facing down toward the ground, with your arms hanging naturally. It should seem as if you're shaking hands with someone square on—and this will lead to hitting down to the ball and through to the target.

The next thing amateurs must have is a correct stance. Again make believe you're shaking hands, or facing the ball square on. Too many players plunk their feet down onto the ground first, put the clubface down and wind up aiming 30 yards off line.

To develop a consistent, effective swing, you must get your feet left of the target with ample room between you and the ball to hit through the shot. Since I advocate the neutral straight hit, the main thing that aims at the target is your clubhead, with your hips, shoulders and feet all slightly left of the target, as if they were a railway line.

Finally, you've got to have your legs flexed all the time, like in a skiing position. Never have straight legs, as this will make it impossible for them to be working with the shot.

These are golf's ABCs, and following them will definitely give you better grades on the golf course.

Sandy Lyle won the Masters in 1988 and, along with notching 20 international victories since 1979, was also the Tournament Players champ in 1987.

COURTESY OF SUN INTERNATIONAL RESORTS

GOLF DESTINATION

ATLANTIS/ OCEAN CLUB

Don't worry about the sharks. They're swimming in the world's largest outdoor open-water aquarium back at the newly renovated Atlantis Hotel in a 3.2 million-gallon plexiglas tank.

But golfers must still be cautious. Lurking nearby, there's a menacing "man-eater," the Paradise Island Golf Club, which boasts 78 bunkers, water on 13 holes and greens the size of two zip codes.

At 6,805 yards and situated next to the Atlantic Ocean, this Dick Wilson-designed layout offers soothing views of yachts gliding through the turquoise waters. All looks serene and picturesque, yet starting at the first hole, golfers get an immediate taste of big trouble. A water hazard cuts through the fairway, and then only the silkiest of wedge shots will help vacationers avoid the four bunkers surrounding the green.

The par-3 sixth hole is a Bahamian version of Pebble Beach. The entire left side is framed by splashing ocean and craggy coral outcrops, and in the distance is the island that appeared in the "Gilligan's Island" TV series.

The back nine is no picnic either. At the par-5, 482-yard 13th, water is everywhere. There's more crashing surf on the next hole to carry away errant tee shots, and if you don't hit your ball laser-straight on the next hole, it'll mean another unsettling trip to Davy Jones' locker.

But "no problem, mon." This is the Bahamas, a sun-swept playground where miscues can be quickly forgotten at the resort's long, white sandy beach, water slides, 12 restaurants and a glitzy casino that throbs with activity all night long.

Just beware. The real sharks are nowhere near the golf course but among those poker and baccarat tables.

The Atlantis and Ocean Club are a 20-minute drive from the international airport in Nassau. Reservations and price information can be obtained by calling (800) 321-3000.

Hotshot

Muhsin Muhammad

Welcome, cornerbacks, to the NFL of the late 20th century. The wide receiver across the line of scrimmage runs a 4.4 40 and is built like a linebacker.

Oh, and he loves to hit. Intimidated?

"When you're big and tall, there's definitely a mental aspect where you feel like you have an advantage over somebody," says 6-2, 220-pound receiver Muhsin Muhammad of the Carolina Panthers. "I think DBs feel that too. When they go up on the line of scrimmage and there's a guy 6-2 or 6-3 across from them, there's something going through his head that's different. He's going to play the guy, but he's not going to dominate him."

Someone once said that in war, the first blow is half the battle. The physical Muhammad is big on establishing himself as the one who will dispense the abuse, and he's relentless. His likeness to a linebacker isn't by accident—he was an all-state performer at the position at Waverly High in Lansing, Mich., before converting to wide receiver at Michigan State.

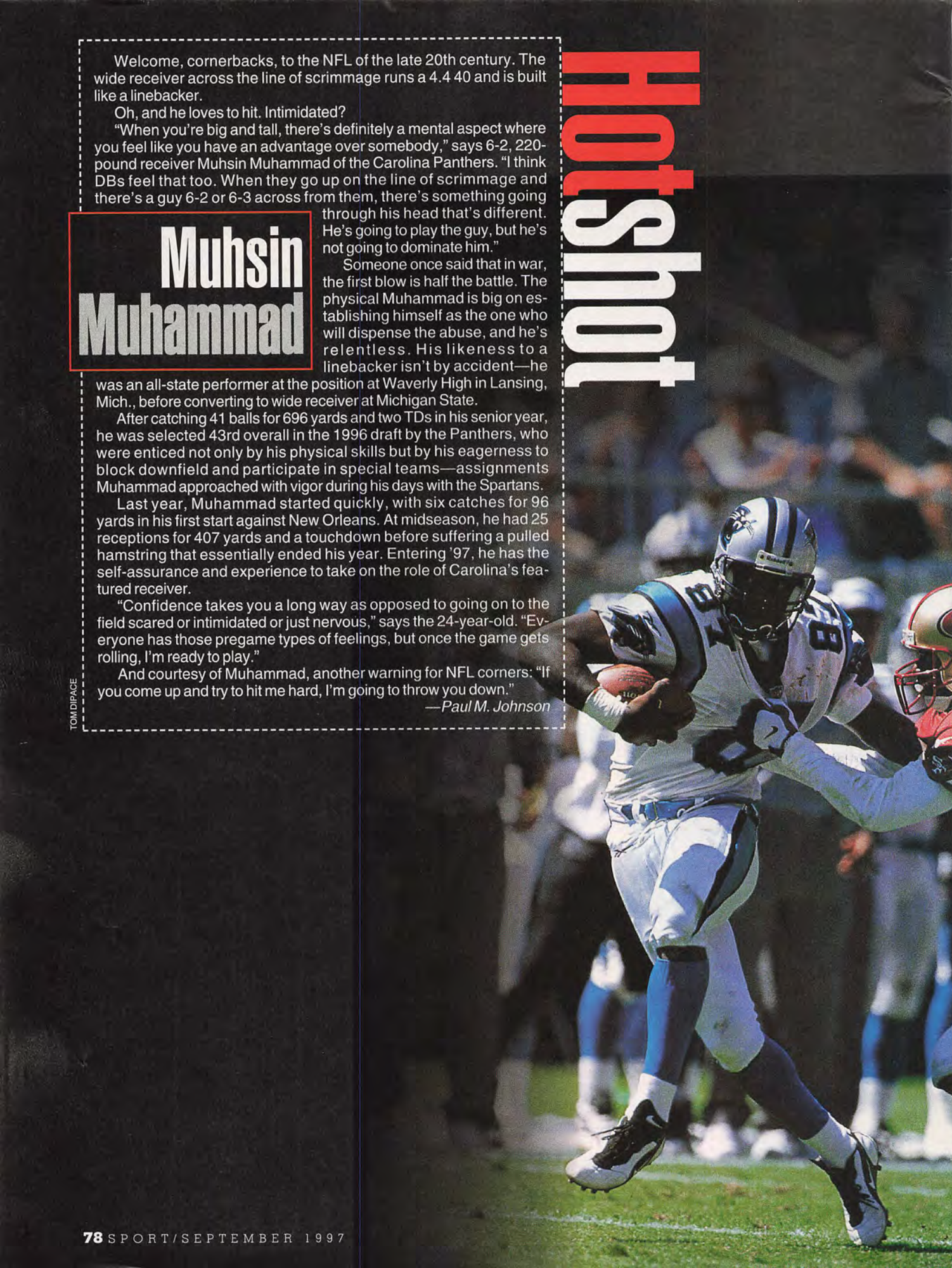
After catching 41 balls for 696 yards and two TDs in his senior year, he was selected 43rd overall in the 1996 draft by the Panthers, who were enticed not only by his physical skills but by his eagerness to block downfield and participate in special teams—assignments Muhammad approached with vigor during his days with the Spartans.

Last year, Muhammad started quickly, with six catches for 96 yards in his first start against New Orleans. At midseason, he had 25 receptions for 407 yards and a touchdown before suffering a pulled hamstring that essentially ended his year. Entering '97, he has the self-assurance and experience to take on the role of Carolina's featured receiver.

"Confidence takes you a long way as opposed to going on to the field scared or intimidated or just nervous," says the 24-year-old. "Everyone has those pregame types of feelings, but once the game gets rolling, I'm ready to play."

And courtesy of Muhammad, another warning for NFL corners: "If you come up and try to hit me hard, I'm going to throw you down."

—Paul M. Johnson



TOM DIPACE

motor sports

BIRD MAN OF INDIANA

Drag Racing's Winningest Driver Retires to the Rain Forest

By Rick Voegelin

The artfully choreographed farewell tour has become as fashionable in auto-racing circles as the silk-screened T-shirts and embroidered caps that are hawked at trackside souvenir stands. If any driver had earned the right to spend his final season basking in the admiration of his fans, it was Pro Stock drag racer Bob Glidden. With the most wins (85) and the most championships (10) in NHRA history, Glidden was the undisputed king of the quarter-mile.

But Glidden simply walked away—without fanfare, without commemorative memorabilia and without an orchestrated media blitz. Glidden decided he would rather spend his time caring for his prized macaws than flogging a race car down a drag strip.

After he failed to make the cut for this year's season-opening event, Glidden just said no to racing. He sold his cars, sold his truck and started work on a 5,000-square-foot aviary alongside his shop in suburban Indianapolis.

"This is going to be a bird shop now," Glidden says with a laugh. "It's going to be like a rain forest right here in Indiana. We've got 17 birds now, and when the building is finished, we'll take in more orphans."

It is entirely predictable that Glidden would pursue his passion for exotic birds with the same intensity that he brought to winning races. The former line mechanic at a Ford dealership became drag racing's most successful driver through sheer tenacity and unabated willpower. Fueled by the non-stop consumption of strong coffee and cigarettes, Glidden keeps an unrelenting pace that has earned him the nicknames "Mad Dog" and "Bad Bob" from his less-motivated rivals.

The king of the quarter-mile, Glidden gave up racing for the birds.

Not even the heart attack and subsequent six-bypass coronary surgery that were the inevitable by-products of his frenetic lifestyle could sideline Glidden. He was back driving a 195-mph race car seven weeks after leaving the hospital.

Glidden's ascent to the pinnacle of his profession could have been scripted by Horatio Alger. He and wife Etta were a pair of "weekend warriors" with more ambition than money when they entered their first big-time race in 1972. Glidden didn't win that day, but he did serve notice to the racing establishment by defeating a host of well-funded opponents and taking his unsponsored Pinto to the final round of eliminations—a feat as unlikely as an amateur golfer winning a PGA title.

The Gliddens, along with sons Billy and Rusty, were the nucleus of a tightly knit family team that dominated drag racing in the '80s. But the strain of maintaining a family racing team eventually took its toll. The boys departed to work for other teams after a rancorous split with their father, while Etta retired to work in her garden. Glidden's outspoken comments about alleged cheating—and his accusations that his own sons were implicated in the scandal—earned him the enmity of several senior racing officials and caused discomfort among his sponsors.

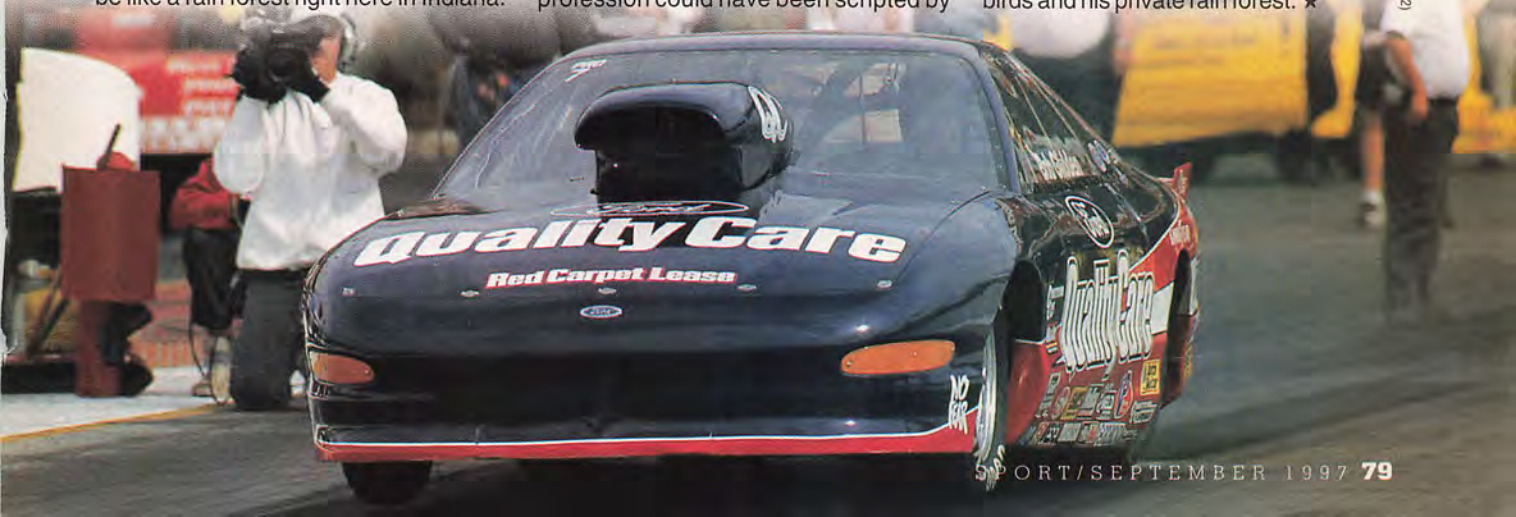
When word finally reached Glidden last year that his sponsorship would not be renewed, he reacted with his customary candor: "The executives who made this decision have no idea what we do out here," he told reporters. "I can walk away from the sport today and feel good about my accomplishments."

Glidden did indeed walk away—and to all appearances, he is feeling better than ever. His sons have returned to the fold, and the family is now developing engines for NASCAR stock car teams.

"I found 50 horsepower," Glidden reports. "I'm having a good time working with this stuff."

After 25 years in the pressure cooker of professional racing, Bob Glidden has finally found peace with his engines, his birds and his private rain forest. ★

JON ASHER (2)



Dodge Presents

sportquiz

Compiled by William Ladson

1 Bruce Smith (pictured) owned a share of the AFC sack title last season with whom?

2 Which NFL team has the longest current regular-season winning streak?

3 Who led the NFL last season in rushing touchdowns?
A. Terrell Davis
B. Curtis Martin
C. Terry Allen
D. Emmitt Smith

4 Which was the only NFL team to go winless on the road last season?

5 Since 1969, five managers have guided the New York Yankees to AL Eastern Division titles. Name them.

6 Who was the last pitcher to win 20 games for the New York Mets?
A. Tom Seaver
B. David Cone
C. Frank Viola
D. Dwight Gooden

7 Who was the Montreal Expos' first pick in the 1968 expansion draft?
A. Rusty Staub
B. Maury Wills
C. Jesus Alou
D. Manny Mota

8 St. Louis Cardinals outfielder Ron Gant started his major-league career at which position?
A. First base
B. Third base
C. Catcher
D. Second base

9 Joe Carter has played for four major-league teams. Name them.

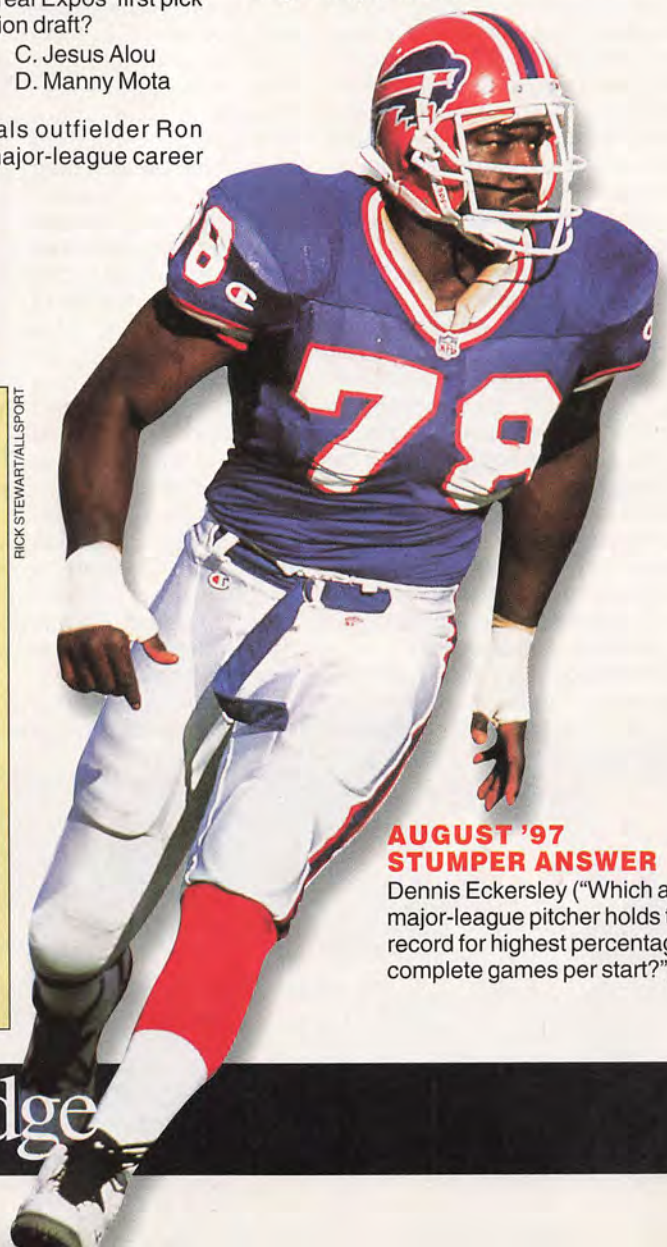
10 Since Mike Schmidt retired in 1989, only one member of the Philadelphia Phillies has reached the 30-homer plateau. Name him.

11 Name the first driver to win consecutive Winston Cup championships.

12 Which driver has the most career Indycar victories?
A. Michael Andretti
B. Al Unser
C. Emerson Fittipaldi
D. A.J. Foyt

13 Name the last two golfers to win the Byron Nelson Classic.

STUMPER Name the only player to have his number retired by three major-league teams.



RICK STEWART/ALLSPORT

THIS MONTH'S QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Michael McCrary 2. Panthers (seven games) 3. C (21) 4. Ravens 5. Billy Martin, Bob Lemon, Dick Howser, Buck Showalter and Joe Torre 6. C 7. D 8. D 9. Cubs, Indians, Padres and Blue Jays 10. Benito Santiago 11. Buck Baker 12. D 13. Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods

CHECK YOUR SCORE...

...and rate yourself as follows:

12-13 correct: Sports genius
9-11 correct: Good fan
6-8 correct: Working too hard
3-5 correct: To the showers
0-2 correct: Try knitting

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AUGUST '97 STUMPER ANSWER

Dennis Eckersley ("Which active major-league pitcher holds the record for highest percentage of complete games per start?")

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Of course Stratus offers other good stuff to help keep the adrenaline level up. Like race-bred, modified double-wishbone suspension, the road-holding stability of cab-forward design and a 2.5 liter six-cylinder engine that is included on AutoStick-equipped models. Stratus comes complete and ready to play. Joystick not required, but highly recommended.

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marketplace

Sony's MLB 98

Perhaps no other sports title will benefit from Sony's conversion to polygons as much as MLB 98. The subtle movements of baseball—particularly the pitching and hitting—are deliberate, artistic and perfected in MLB's polygonal form.

Sony's program development team was provided video tapes by major-league baseball (one of the benefits of having an MLB and MLB Players Association license) so that actual players' batting stances and pitching deliveries could be mimicked through motion capture. Each player will be to scale. Seattle Mariners pitcher Randy Johnson, all 6-feet-10 of him, will look as imposing in this game as he does on the real-life mound. And New York Yankees designated hitter Cecil Fielder won't be as svelte as, say, St. Louis Cardinals outfielder Willie McGee—there will be different models for different body types and sizes. Unlike many games, the entire stadium environment is three-dimensional, making for a 360-degree, 3-D world.

But looks aren't everything. Sony's now-standard, impeccable gameplay is more impressive than in any other game on the market. Especially noteworthy is the speed of the game—it won't take you all day to set things up.

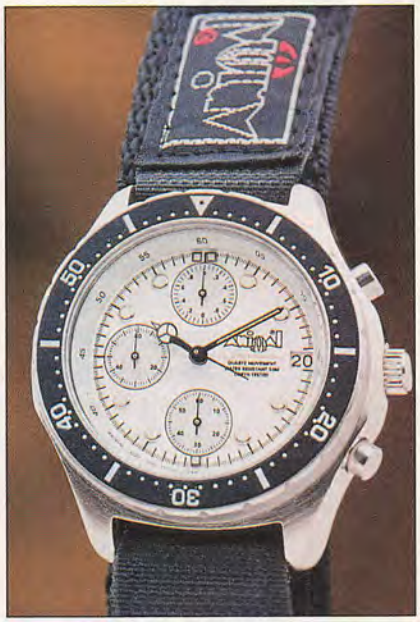
Among the key elements of MLB 98 are new motion-captured animations (backhand stabs, throws from the knees, throws on the run, over-the-fence catches, hook and pop-up slides and home-plate collisions), the presence of all players, teams and stadiums (MLB and MLBPA licenses), and atmospheric effects such as wind, altitude and playing surface.

Add this game to the otherwise average pool of baseball titles, and the field may need some time to catch up.

Hyper Wheels

Roller hockey is blowing up big, and Hyper Wheels is right there with it. The official supplier of Roller Hockey International, which is the exciting and increasingly popular sport's pre-eminent league, Hyper has been there since the beginning.

All Hyper Hockey Wheels are constructed with Urethane Core Technology, which proves an inseparable bond between the urethane of the wheel and the urethane of the core or bearing seat. This prevents any "blowouts" and wheel breakage caused by extreme pressure roller hockey players put on their wheels. Hyper currently makes nine different models of wheels and has introduced new models in each of the past three years. Call (800) BE HYPER.



Animal

Having been in the U.S. market for over a year, UK-based Animal is creating a niche with its colorful, practical products. The gems of the line are the five styles of watches, featuring solid stainless steel case construction and a large, easy-to-read face with glow-in-the-dark dials. Attractive and durable—the W001 model is water-resistant to 100 meters and has been pressure-tested in both air and water to 100 meters as well—the timepieces come with a limited 10-year warranty. All watches have a rotating timer bezel, date indicator and watertight, screw-in crown.

Animal recently announced a sponsorship deal with Team Mongoose (which has professional mountain bike and BMX race teams) to add to its other watch-wearers—surf legend Sunny Garcia and U.S. Olympic beach volleyball silver medalist Mike Whitmarsh. You know these watches can stand up to abuse.

Animal also features handsome hats, backpacks, wallets, watchstraps and keychains. Call Animal at (800) 995-0605.

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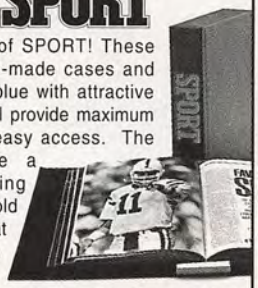

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Hotshot

Chris Keldorf

It would be too easy to criticize Chris Keldorf's first two college coaches for thinking he would make a better tight end than quarterback. Maybe they were fascinated by prototypes, and 6-5, 235 usually makes you think something other than your man behind center.

"I've had people down the line tell me I couldn't do it," says Keldorf, ensconced field general for the highly regarded North Carolina Tar Heels. "They said I wasn't a quarterback, that I was a tight end or linebacker or something like that. I just stuck with it."

Keldorf was given a scholarship to Utah State after an unspectacular high school career but was told after one day of quarterbacking that tight end better suited him. He ended up back home in Manhattan Beach, Calif., three weeks later. After enrolling at nearby El Camino Junior College, he ran into another roadblock—the desired job was snatched by Steve Sarkisian, who ultimately became one of California's top all-time JUCO passers and an All-American at BYU. Keldorf resignedly fulfilled clipboard duties for one season before the coaching staff reintroduced the unpopular notion of playing tight end. He fled once more, this time to Palomar Junior College, where after a year as a backup, he finally got his hands on the ball.

Three-thousand yards and 30 TD passes later, Keldorf at last was being assessed as a quarterback, and North Carolina, nervous about heir apparent Oscar Davenport's recovery from knee surgery, brought him in.

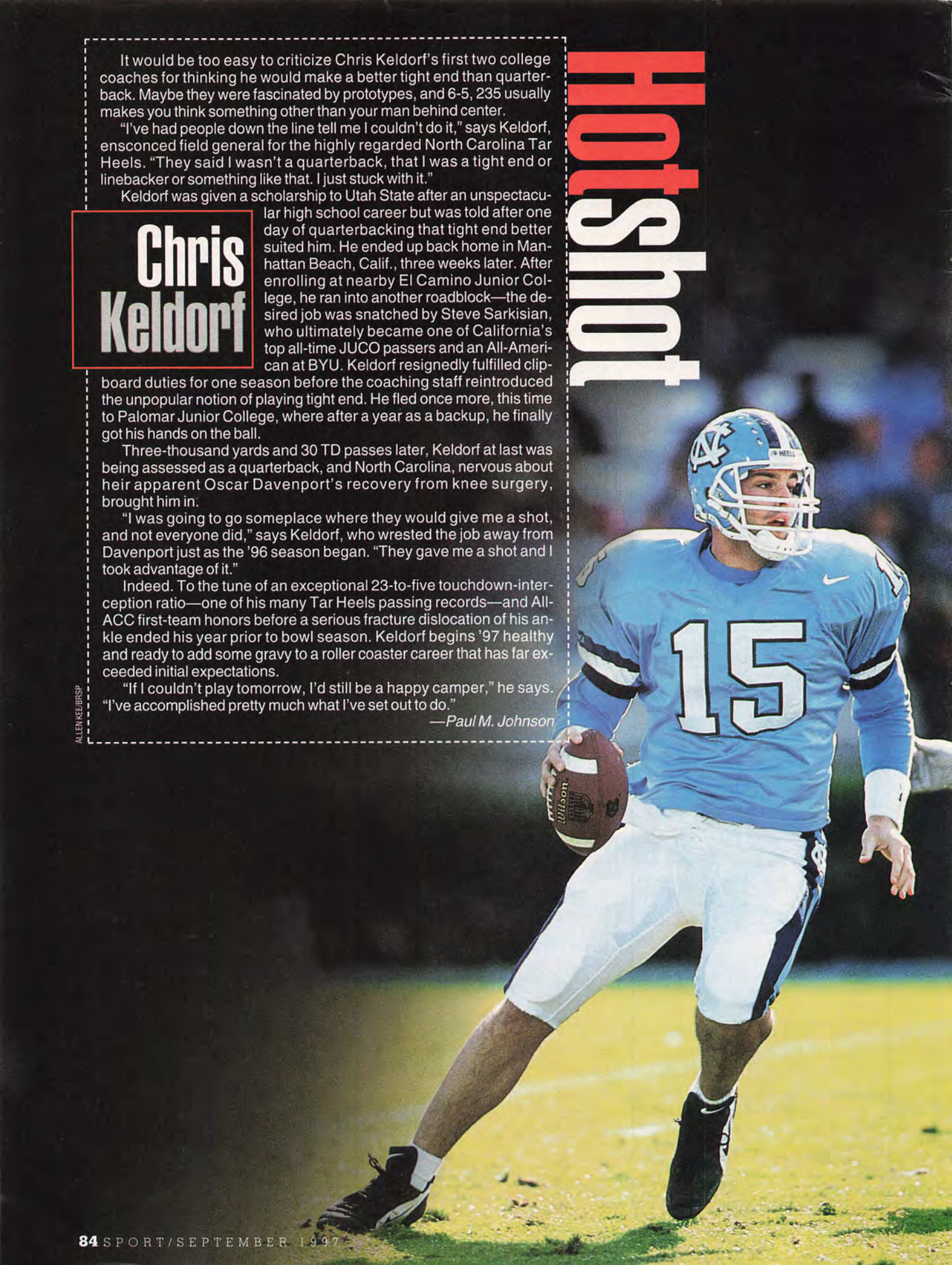
"I was going to go someplace where they would give me a shot, and not everyone did," says Keldorf, who wrested the job away from Davenport just as the '96 season began. "They gave me a shot and I took advantage of it."

Indeed. To the tune of an exceptional 23-to-five touchdown-interception ratio—one of his many Tar Heels passing records—and All-ACC first-team honors before a serious fracture dislocation of his ankle ended his year prior to bowl season. Keldorf begins '97 healthy and ready to add some gravy to a roller coaster career that has far exceeded initial expectations.

"If I couldn't play tomorrow, I'd still be a happy camper," he says. "I've accomplished pretty much what I've set out to do."

—Paul M. Johnson

ALLEN KEE/BRSP



Get smart...

...about Tiger Woods

By Jeff Weinstock

Part-Chinese, part-American Indian, several shares Thai, Tiger Woods is trying to discourage accounts of him as the first great black golfer, since he's only a little black.

Woods won't need me telling him, but *a little black* may be as radical a notion as a 21-year-old Masters champ. In a country that computes race by sneakily sinister math—black + X = black, as though black blood were a marauding contaminant—you can't be a little black any more than you can be a little bald or a little broke.

And Woods is hopeless to fend off descriptions of him as African American. So terrorized we are by our terms, I once heard Geraldo Rivera ask an Englishwoman what it was like to be African American in her country. Really, he did.

Woods says he's coined "Cablinasian" to designate his polygenetics, sort of another word for "Other." He's certainly the first of them to win the Masters, and even a devoutly apolitical sorehead like myself can see the progress in that.

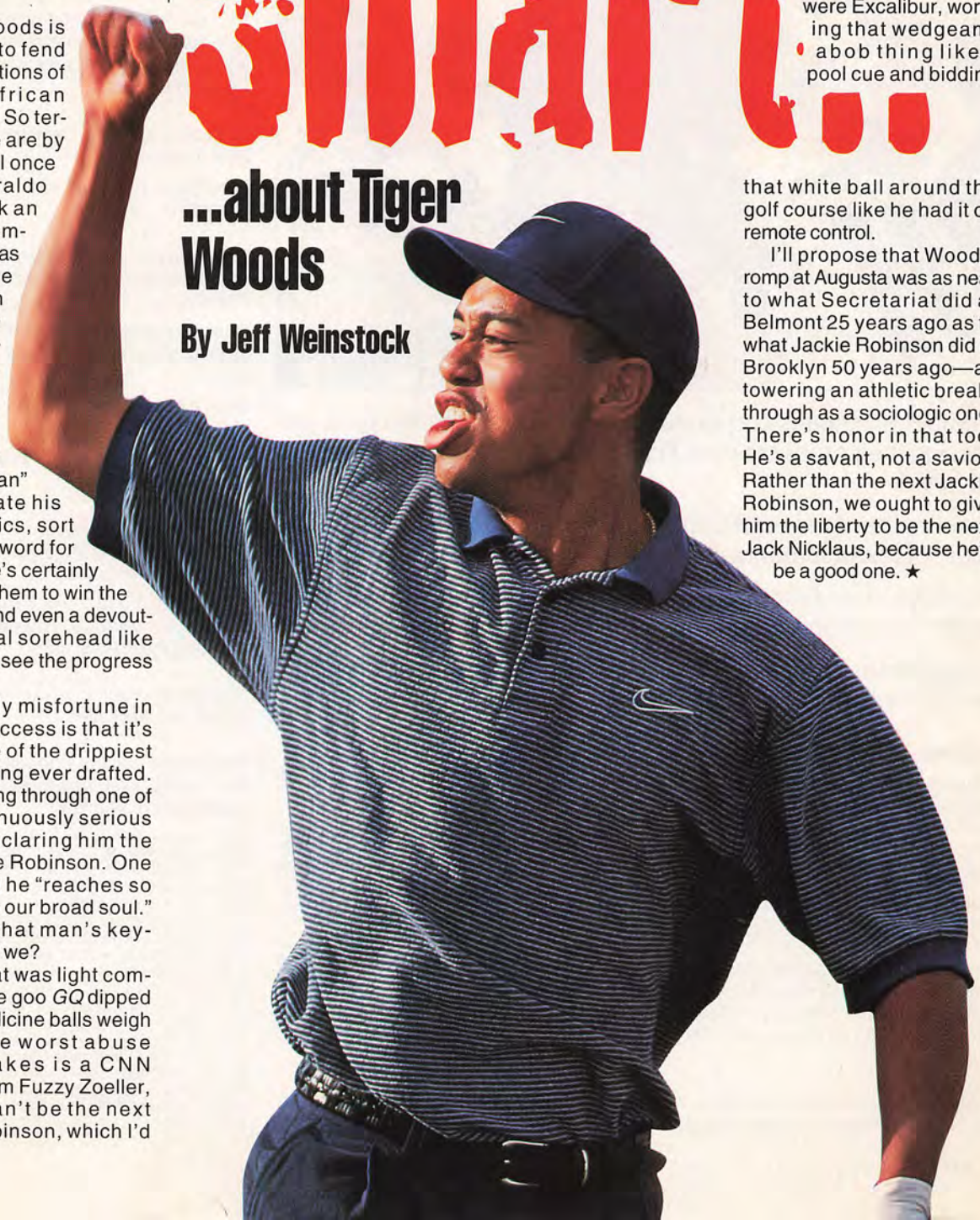
The only misfortune in Woods' success is that it's bred some of the drippiest sportswriting ever drafted. Try tunneling through one of those strenuously serious essays declaring him the next Jackie Robinson. One writer said he "reaches so deeply into our broad soul." Impound that man's keyboard, shall we?

Still, that was light compared to the goo *GQ* dipped him in. Medicine balls weigh less. If the worst abuse Woods takes is a CNN blooper from Fuzzy Zoeller, then he can't be the next Jackie Robinson, which I'd guess he's thankful for.

My only issue with Woods is his wardrobe: Surrender the Swoosh! Every time he's on my TV, he's strapped in Nike from hair to hoof. It creates distance, as well as suspicion. Makes him look managed. No one so young should be so eagerly corporate. He doesn't need to serve that modern-day mammon Phil Knight. And if he's, pardon, teed at being labeled African American, he might want to speak to Knight, or whoever at Nike scrolled across his first commercial spot, "Tiger Woods is African American."

If Woods doesn't like such nit-picking, then he should be careful not to take on the Next Jackie Robinson robes. He'll have the press patting down every one of his actions for possible violations. Better he promise only to keep brandishing that driver as if it were Excalibur, working that wedgeamabob thing like a pool cue and bidding that white ball around the golf course like he had it on remote control.

I'll propose that Woods' romp at Augusta was as near to what Secretariat did at Belmont 25 years ago as to what Jackie Robinson did in Brooklyn 50 years ago—as towering an athletic breakthrough as a sociologic one. There's honor in that too. He's a savant, not a savior. Rather than the next Jackie Robinson, we ought to give him the liberty to be the next Jack Nicklaus, because he'd be a good one. ★



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Noteworthy Numbers and Stat Oddities/**By Dan Gordon**

Number of athletes corporate executives would rather have endorsing their products than Tiger Woods, according to a recent survey: 0

Amount that American Express reportedly paid Woods for five years of endorsements: $30 million

Increase in an American Express share when the news of the endorsement agreement with Woods was announced: 1¼

Approximate percentage increase in TV ratings for tournaments in which Woods participates: 150

MVP awards won by Ken Griffey Jr.: 0

Players in the history of baseball who had more homers by the age of 26 than Griffey: 5 (Jimmie Foxx, Eddie Mathews, Mickey Mantle, Mel Ott, Frank Robinson)

Number of the above who are in the Hall of Fame: 5

Number of major-leaguers who hit more than 400 homers but haven't been elected to the Hall of Fame since becoming eligible: 2 (Dave Kingman, Darrell Evans)

Years since a non-Braves pitcher won the National League Cy Young Award: 7

Currently active NL pitchers not on Atlanta who have won the league's award: 1 (Fernando Valenzuela, in 1981)

Average number of days lost to the disabled list per season by the Phillies from 1992 through '96, highest in the majors: 975

Number of major-league pitchers who threw strikes on more than 70 percent of their pitches in 1996: 2 (Greg Maddux, 71.5; Dennis Eckersley, 70.8)

Major-league average: 61.8

Second basemen with more career homers than Ryne Sandberg: 0

Number of Little League World Series won by Taiwan since 1969: 17

Years since tennis' U.S. Open final has gone the full five sets: 9

Number of NFL teams that averaged more than a yard better when running to the left than when running to the right in 1996: 3 (Lions, Chiefs, Chargers)

NFL teams that fared much better running right last season, averaging at least a yard more on plays going to that side: 2 (Cardinals, Jets)

Most pass plays per sack allowed in '96: 26.6 (Cowboys)

Least pass plays per sack allowed: 9.2 (Giants)

Best career field goal percentage among active NFL kickers: 81.3 (Doug Pelfrey)

Best percentage on kicks of 1-39 yards among active kickers: 96.5 (Jason Hanson)

Best percentage, 40-49 yards: 74.5 (Steve Christie)

Best percentage, 50-plus yards: 65.4 (Chris Jacke)

Winning percentage posted by Larry Bird's rival/friend Magic Johnson in 16 games as Lakers coach: .313

New Celtics coach Rick Pitino's NBA winning percentage in the two years he coached the Knicks: .556

Number of coaches who have won both NCAA and NBA titles: 0

Helmetless players who will skate in the NHL in 1997-98 now that Craig MacTavish has retired: 0 ★

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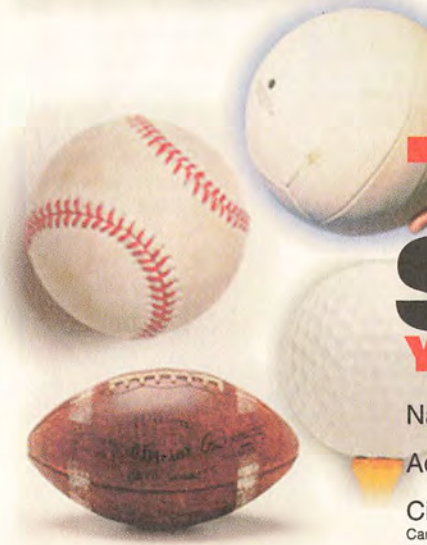

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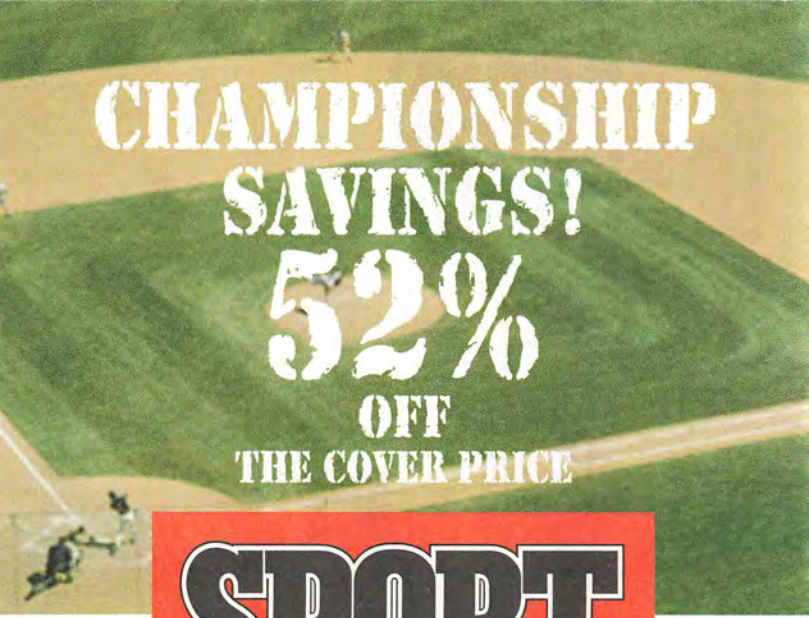

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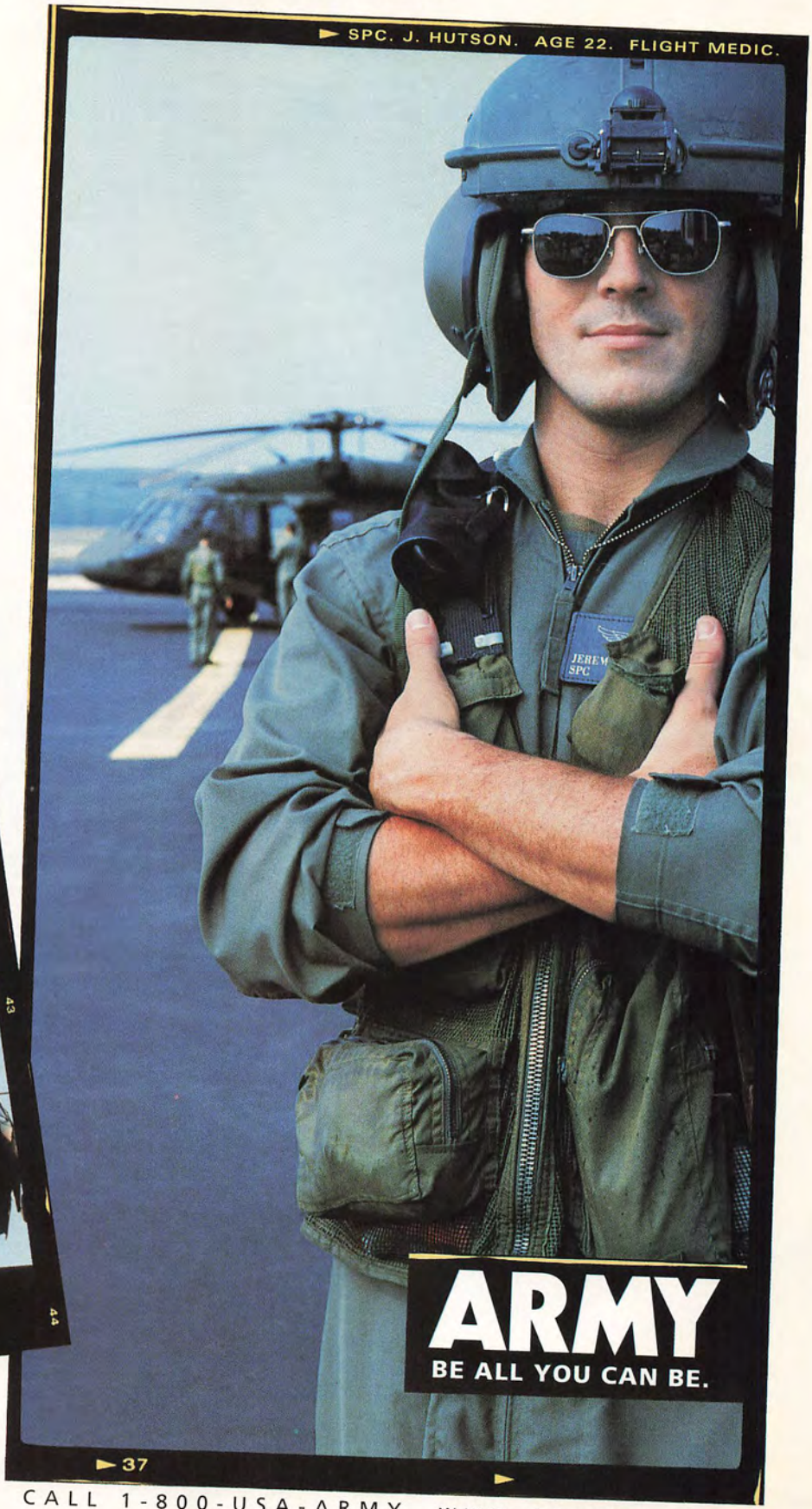

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